THE DEAD WITNESSE YET SPEAKING TO HIS LIVING FRIENDS.

Being the Substance of *Eight* several *Sermons*, lately Preached by way of *Farewel* to a *Country-Auditory*; And now made Publick for the benefit of them, and all others that may stand in need thereof.

By *Joseph Cooper*.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute Judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness, Micah 7. 9.

Printed *Anno Dom.* 1663.

CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY
PRESENTED BY
MRS WILSON
OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS
FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE LATE
JOSHUA WILSON Esq
1876

To his very loving and dearly beloved Friends, the Inhabitants of *M.* in the County of *Worceſter*, *Joſeph Cooper* their late Paſtour, wiſheth truth of Grace, with growth and perſeverance therein, till at length they be crowned with everlaſting glory.

My dear Friends,

THe *Proſperity and eternal Welfare of your immortal Souls, is the great Deſign of theſe enſuing Sermons: and I doubt not, but as they found Acceptance with you from the Pulpit, ſo they will be welcom to you from the Preſs. That I have preſumed upon this preſent Publication, my preſent Condition* (*I hope*) *will be a ſufficient Apologie for me, with you that know it. However, let it ſuffice, that my hearts deſire and prayer to God for every one of you, is, that you may be ſaved when Chriſt ſhall come* to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe: *if then, deſiring your eternal Salvation, I cannot promote it as I would, pardon me if I endeavour the promotion thereof as I can. Had I been capable of being ſerviceable to your immortal Souls as formerly; a conſciouſneſs of my own weakneſs, would have been a ſufficient diſſwaſive to me from attempting it thus: But ſince the Providence of an infinitely kind and*

gracious God hath denied me that happineſs, let me rather betray my own weakneſs, than give you any juſt occaſion to ſuſpect me of unwillingneſs to ſpend and be ſpent for the good of your never-dying-Souls, in thus bequeathing you, as a Legacy, ſome of my laſt labours amongſt you, and conſecrating them to the ſervice of your Faith, Hope, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. I cannot but be ſenſible that you have all of you immortal Souls, which are like to be happy or miſerable to all eternity: Walking therefore under the lively ſenſe of this great and everlaſting Truth, I could not but be very ſolicitous about putting ſome advantage into your hands that might have a tendency to the preventing of your Souls everlaſting miſery in Hell, and withal to the due preparing of them through grace, for eternal felicity in the full, immediate, Soul-ſatisfying fruition of God in a ſtate of glory. Give me leave then, out of that tender love and reſpect that I owe to your immortal Souls, to put theſe following Sermons into your hands, and withal in a few lines by way of Preface thereto, to acquaint you with what I judge doth moſt nearly concern your everlaſting welfare. And truly, my dear Friends, were my Miniſterial breath wholly to exſpire whilſt I am writing theſe things, were I to be diſſolved the next hour, were I never to ſee your faces again in the fleſh, nor any more to ſpeak to you in the Name of Chriſt, till we all ſhall be convented before Gods dreadful Tribunal, to which we muſt ſtand or fall to all eternity: Theſe are ſome of thoſe things that I would leave with you, theſe are the words in which I would beſpeak you, theſe are thoſe great and everlaſting Conſiderations, which, with burning love in my heart, with briniſh tears in my eyes, and with the language

of

of a faithful Friend in my mouth. I would endeavour to ſet home upon your hearts; and therefore, with all ſeriouſneſs reading them, I hope you will give all diligence to be transformed into the likeneſs, purity, and holineſs of them.

1. *Then be ſure that you never reſt in a carnal unregenerate condition. A man muſt firſt be born after the fleſh before he can live the life of nature in the World that now is: ſo you muſt of neceſſity be born after the Spirit, would you ever live the life of glory in the World to come. For, ſaith our bleſſed Lord,* Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, Joh. 3. 5. *This* except (*my dear Friends*) *is without exception! You muſt firſt be tranſlated out of a ſtate of Nature, into a ſtate of Grace; or, out of a ſtate of Grace into a ſtate of Glory, you can never be tranſlated; the one neceſſarily preſuppoſing the other. 'Tis ſtoried of the* Romans *that they had two Temples, the one dedicated to* Honour, *the other to* Virtue; *and theſe ſo artificially contrived, that no man could enter into the Temple of* Honour, *but he muſt firſt go through the Temple of* Virtue: *The accommodation is eaſie; Holy you muſt be, or Happy you can never be; you muſt firſt become new Creatures in Chriſt, or you can never enter into the* new Jeruſalem; *you can never exſpect the honour of being made Pillars in the Temple of God for ever, in caſe you ſit down ſatisfied in a carnal unregenerate condition. And can you be content to fall ſhort of everlaſting glory? Can you be content to fall ſhort of eternal life? Can you (in a word) be content to loſe the beatifical, ſoul-ſatisfying Viſion of the ever bleſſed God, in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy,*

and at whoſe right hand there are pleaſures for evermore? If not, as I am ſure you cannot, Oh then give diligence to be born again, to become new creatures in Chriſt, that at length you may inherit the new Jeruſalem.

2. *Give diligence to improve every Talent, that the Lord ſhall entruſt you with. Your time, your eſtates, your ſtrength, your lives, none of theſe are your own, but all in reference to an eternal account: Oh then, let them all be carefully improved for His glory, whoſe ſtewards you are, and to whom you muſt be reſponſible in the great Day, that you may give up your account with joy, and not with ſorrow! The end of God's bounty, is Man's duty; and of all the vouchſafements of his love and goodneſs to us, he expects that we ſhould make a good improvement. Well then, whatever Mercies the Lord hath beſtowed upon you, whatever Talents he hath entruſted you with, improve them all for his glory, as thoſe that muſt ſhortly be reſponſible to Him for them. Have you any Eſtate, any Credit, any Intereſt in the World? Hath God given you riches, and health, and ſtrength, and life, whilſt others are deprived of all? Be ſure, that you make a good uſe of all, that you do not imbezil your Lord's Talent, but ſee that you ſo improve it, that he may have glory, and your Souls everlaſting conſolation at that day! Oh what joy, what a precious cordial, what everlaſting conſolation will this be on the death-bed, when a Chriſtian can ſhew five Talents gained by every Talent, wherewith at any time the Lord entruſted him! Oh with what comfort may ſuch lay down their lives and all their creature-enjoyments, who have faithfully laid out all in the ſervice of God! Now the Lord comes to glorifie thee,*

who

who all thy life long haſt been glorifying him: now he welcomes thy Soul to the heavenly Jeruſalem, *and entertains thee with an* Euge bone ſerve! Well done good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will now make thee ruler over many; Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! *Matth.* 25. 23.

As ever therefore you deſire comfort in the hour of death, Oh let me as an helper of your joy, prevail with you to make a due improvement of all your enjoyments!

3. *Make ſure of an Intereſt in the Lord Jeſus.* There is none other Name given under heaven amongſt men, whereby we muſt be ſaved, *Acts* 4. 12. *If ever you obtain the bleſſing of peace and reconciliation with God, if ever you obtain the bleſſing of pardon and forgiveneſs of ſins, if ever you obtain the bleſſing of grace here and everlaſting glory hereafter at the hands of God, it muſt be in the garments of Chriſt, our elder Brother. Through Chriſt you may be received into favour with God, and partake of his loving-kindneſs, which is better than life it ſelf; through Chriſt you may have acceſs with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace, and find the Lord ready to anſwer you in all your deſires; through Chriſt you may obtain the forgiveneſs of all your ſins, how many and grievous ſoever, together with an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for all ſuch as make Chriſt their portion! Oh then deprive not your ſelves of ſuch great and everlaſting felicity by refuſing to accept of Chriſt upon Goſpel-terms, but ſee now that you cloſe with him, that you ſubmit to the ſcepter of his Kingdom, that you willingly receive him to dwell in your hearts*

by Faith! To ſeek for peace, and for pardon of ſin, and for life, and everlaſting glory, is to be ſeeking the living amongſt the dead, if we ſeek it out of Chriſt. For though there be life, and happineſs, and everlaſting glory for loſt ſinners; yet all this is laid up in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, who will never diſpenſe it to any, but ſuch as believe in him, and make him their portion, 1 Joh. 5. 12.

4. *Labour to be practitioners of what you are profeſſors, and doers of what you are knowers. Choiſe ſpeculations, if not anſwered with an holy life and converſation, will but aggravate your ſin, and expoſe your Souls to a greater extremitie of endleſs miſery,* Luk. 12. 47.

Οὐκ ἐν λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν ἔργοις τὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας θεοσεβείας πράγματα. Juſtin. Martyr.

Chriſtianity (you muſt know) doth conſiſt, not in words, but in works; not in knowledge, but in practiſe; not in choiſe notions, but in holy actings and motions for Chriſt our Redeemer. A clear head, and a foul heart; an holy profeſſion, and a wicked converſation, do not well accord.

Be your knowledge what it will, yet if you anſwer it not with ſuitable practice, it will profit you nothing, John 13. 17. *What good doth a light under a Buſhel? So what good can your knowledge do you, if not digeſted into practice? Your knowledg indeed, it may make you admired, but bleſſed it can never make you.*

See then, if you love your immortal Souls, that you anſwer your Goſpel-light with a Goſpel-life; and what ever knowledge you have laid up; Oh now give

diligence

diligence that, you may practically lay it out! Let it never be ſaid that you held the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and that, knowing your Maſter's will, you would not do it! A man may repent of his fruitleſs knowledge, but never did any man yet repent of that Knowledg, which uſhered in Obedience to Gods Commandments. There is Salvation running along in every one of Gods precepts, and all his Commandments, when known and practiſed by us, they center themſelves in our Eternal bleſſedneſs: Whatever therefore you know to be ſin, be ſure that you ſtand at a diſtance from it: and whatever you know to be duty, be ſure that with all diligence and ſerioufneſs, you ſet about it. For conſider: thoſe, who have here refuſed to touch the forbidden Tree of ſin, endeavouring to live up to their knowledge, ſhall feed erelong upon the Tree of Life, in the Paradiſe of God: *whilſt ſuch as knew their Maſters will, and would not do it, ſhall be* puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of God, and from the glory of his Power, Rev. 22. 2. Theſ. 1. 9.

5. *Be ſure that you alwayes mind Gods Glory, endeavouring by all holy converſation and godlineſs, to promote the ſame as the great end of your lives. If we honour our Parents who were only the Inſtruments, how much more ſhould we glorifie God, who alone is the Author of our life and beeing? Should we not conſult his Glory in every thing, from whom we have received all? If God have given us both life, and the comforts of life, why ſhould we not live to Him and his Glory? Is it not (my dear friends) a thouſand times better, that in the courſes of our lives, we ſhould give God the glory of his Mercy, than let him have occaſion, through your neglect, of glorifying that dread-*

dreadful Attribute of his Juſtice upon you? Is it not better that you ſhould now become Tributaries in a way of obedience to Gods Glory, than be expoſed hereafter to perpetual ſhame, and everlaſting contempt in the World to come? Is it not a thouſand times better, that now you ſhould raiſe up glory by an holy converſation to the Lord Jehovah, than that hereafter he ſhould raiſe up glory to himſelf, out of your eternal ruins? Levit. 10. 3.

Let me then in the bowels of Chriſt, beſeech you to be as careful in every thing of Gods glory, as you would be deſirous of eſcaping everlaſting miſery; The way, my Brethren, to be great hereafter, is to be good here; and the way to be glorified in Heaven above, is to glorifie God on Earth beneath, 1 Sam. 2. 30. Do but live to God here, and you ſhall undoubtedly live with him for ever hereafter! Do but propoſe to your ſelves Gods glory in all your undertakings, let this be the center wherein the lines of all your actions may meet, and then you may comfort your ſelves in expectation of as much bleſſedneſs, glory, and everlaſting happineſs in Heaven, as your hearts can deſire, though enlarged to the utmoſt of all created capacities.

6. See that you have weaned affections to all your creature-enjoyments. Why is it that every Roſe in this life hath its Thorne? that all our Hony hath Gall in it? that our beſt Wine is mixed with ſome water? but that hereby the Lord would learn us to ſit looſe to all creature-enjoyments: Therefore hath the Lord rubbed Wormwood, and put bitterneſs upon the breaſt of every thing in this World, that we might not too much be hanging thereon. Such is the folly that is bound up in our hearts by nature, that we uſually

pre-

prefer things ſeen though but Temporal, before things not ſeen which are Eternal; An Egypt, *before* Canaan; *The meat that periſheth, before the meat that ſhall endure to Eternal life; The barren Wilderneſs of this World, before a Paradice of Heavenly Glory. But ſhall not that Vanity, that Emptineſſe, that Diſappointment that we find in theſe things, Alienate our affections from them, and make us as dead to them? What I pray you could the World ever yet do for its greateſt Favourites? Did it ever yet comfort any man labouring under the Throbs, Eſtuations, and bloody Agonies of a wounded Conſcience? Did it ever yet give ſatisfaction to an immortal ſoul, ſo that like a ſtone in the center, it would go no further? Can the World ingratiate your ſouls with the Lord* Jehovah, *and make him your friend? Will the World be Armour of proof, againſt the terrours of death? Will it purchaſe you an intereſt in Heavenly Glory? Will it deliver your ſouls in a day of wrath, and become your Advocate, when at laſt you ſhall be convented before Gods dreadful Tribunal? Is not the World with all its enjoyments, like broken Ciſterns wherein can be found no water to refreſh your thirſty ſouls, or like broken Reeds, that if we lean upon them, will mortally wound us? Or like a Shaddow which when the Sun of our lives goes down will everlaſtingly diſappear? Suffer then, I beſeech you, your ſouls no longer to be enſnared by theſe fading vanities; but labour now whilſt you live to ſcorn, diſaffect, and contemn the World with all its enjoyments, as much as you will wiſh you had done, when you come to die? Oh! how ſmall is the comfort which the choiſeſt of all creature-enjoyments can adminiſter to a dying-man, now ready to be convented*

before

before the Tribunal of Chriſt, there to give an account of his Stewardſhip, now ſtanding upon the brink of Eternity, and ready to enter upon an everlaſting unchangeable condition; Why then ſhould thoſe things be nearest your hearts whilſt you live, which cannot comfort your hearts when you come to die?

Oh! place not your hearts upon thoſe things, upon which the Lord would have you to put your feet! You muſt firſt be dead to the World, or ever you can live unto God! Firſt you muſt be emptied of Earth, before ever you can be filled with Heavenly Glory!

7. *Walk daily in communion with God, giving diligence to keep cloſe to him in every duty, you are none of you any further Chriſtians, than you hold communion with God in Chriſt. Be not then eſtranged from God, do not forget him daies without number; do not ſtand any longer at a diſtance from him, but now labour that you may acquaint your ſelves with him, that you may ſit down under his Shaddow with great delight, and let his fruit be ſweet to your taſte; now labour to keep cloſe to God, and experience his loving kindneſs in every dutie, counting one daies communion with him, better than a thouſand elſe where: Let no day paſs you, my dear friends, without the ſerious performance of ſome Religious dutie, nor any dutie wherein you do not experience the power of Gods grace upon your hearts, wherein your ſouls are not filled as with marrow and fatneſs, wherein your hearts are not wonderfully warmed and drawn out after God, wherein you get not ſome further acquaintance, ſome fellowſhip, ſome heavenlie communion with the God of Heaven. Tis neither Praying, nor Reading, nor Conferring, but communion with God in theſe that can give ſatisfaction. Frequent then the Aſſemblies*

of

of the Saints, wait dailie at Wiſdom's Gates, *bathe your ſouls often in the pure Waters of the Sanctuarie, and be often in your ſecret retirements, in Praying, and Reading, and heavenlie Meditations; but, be ſure you improve them all as means of communion with God, as ſo many golden Pipes conveying the oyl of Grace, into the Veſſels of your Immortal ſouls, as ſo many ſpiritual* Bethesda's, *that may heal you of all ſinful diſtempers, as ſo manie open doors, giving you an entrance into the ſecret Chambers, of ſweet fellowſhip with God in Chriſt. Oh! little do you know the comfort, the peace, the ſoul-ravi ſhing delights of a man walking dailie in communion with God: If ever you would know it, acquaint your ſouls with the* Lord, *and keep cloſe to him in every dutie; A man keeping cloſe to God, and walking daily in communion with him, is alreadie in the Suburbs of the heavenlie* Jeruſalem, *the citie of the great King, he lives in a Paradiſe of all ſpiritual delight, and ſoul-ſatisfying pleaſures. In a word that you may mind this dutie, which indeed you ſhould make the great work of your lives; let this alwaies be remembred, that, communion with God in a ſtate of Grace, is the onlie way leading to the everlaſting enjoyment of God, in a ſtate of Glorie.*

8. *See that you daily live in the expectation of Death, and that eternal Judgement that muſt follow after, never daring to do anie thing, but what you may own with comfort at that day; There is nothing more operative to holie walking, than by ſerious thoughts of Death and Judgement, to antedate the terrours of death to a graceleſs ſoul, and the ſevere impartial Account; that muſt immediatelie thereupon be made before Gods dreadful Tribunal.*

This

This would quicken the ſoul to all ſuch duties, as will miniſter comfort at Death and Judgement; this ſtands as a watchful Centinel againſt everie temptation, making a man cry out when ever ſolicited to commit folly; How can I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God? *If a Ship be not well balaſted, it will eaſilie overturn: The reaſon why ſo many are overturned with everie wind of temptation, why ſo many can diſſemble conſcience, corrupt themſelves, accommodate themſelves to the humours of the times, ſtrike hands with the workers of iniquity, build again what ſometime they deſtroyed, transform themſelves* Camelion-*like, into the ſhape of every prevailing faction, and live dailie in the careleſs neglect of God, and Chriſt, and everlaſting Concernments: the reaſon of all this is, that their hearts were never well balaſted with the lively thoughts and preoccupations of an approaching Death, and that Eternal judgement that muſt follow after. Oh therefore, my dear Friends, in the bowels of Chriſt, let me beſeech you to think ſad and ſerious thoughts, about your approaching Death, and that dreadful Account which you muſt ſhortlie make before the Righteous Judge of all the world! After this there is no more day of Grace, no further calling to repentance, no more ſtretching out the golden Scepter, no more Manna will now fall, no Angel will ever any more deſcend into the Pool; but, in caſe you be found unprepared, the door of Mercy will for ever be ſhut againſt you: Oh therefore live now as if Death were ſtriking that fatal ſtroke, and had received a Commiſſion to carrie you before God's Tribunal. Now live as if death that King of Terrours were juſt laying his cold hands upon you, as if the Trumpet were ſounding, the Books opened*

pened, the Judge ſate clothed with Majeſtie and glory, having all men convented before his dreadful Tribunal, expecting their everlaſting doom, either, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom from eternity prepared for you; *Or,* Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels! *Oh think often with your ſelves, Whether will be better at this day, to be found holy or prophane, to be found watching or negligent, to be found reconciled to God or at enmitie with him, to be found praying or blaſpheming, to be found worſhipping the Lord in ſpirit and in truth, or after your own inventions; to be found repenting or ſinning, to be found wicked or righteous, amongſt thoſe that ſerve God, or thoſe that ſerve him not? Oh would you but dwell much in your thoughts and meditations upon theſe things; thus anticipating the terrour of Death and Judgement to all that are ungodly, what manner of perſons would it ſoon make you in all holy converſation and godlineſs! How diligent would this make you, to work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling, to be found of God in peace without ſpot, and blameleſs at that day!*

9. *Be careful to ſet your affections on things above, and in the midſt of all your creature-enjoyments, let your hearts be carried out after God in Chriſt as your only happineſs. Oh ſeek not the living amongſt the dead! Oh do not expect happineſs from that which is vanity and vexation of ſpirit: but if God be your happineſs, your portion, your treaſure, then where this treaſure is, there let your hearts be alſo! A ſtone falling downward will never reſt till it comes to its center: if God in Chriſt be the center towards which you move, then reſt not ſatisfied with any thing till*

your

your ſouls ſhall take center in him. Remember that of Auſtin, Feciſti nos Domini propter te, & ſemper inquietum eſt cor noſtrum donec requieſcat in te; *As God never reſted till he had made Man, ſo let not any one, man or woman, reſt till they return to God, till their hearts are wholly fixed upon him as their exceeding great reward. You deſire honours which are fugitive, and will ſoon be blaſted; Is not then everlaſting honour in Gods preſence, much more to be deſired? You deſire riches, which make themſelves wings and fly away; Is not then that better part much more to be thirſted after, which ſhall never be taken from you? You deſire pleaſure and contentment, but what is the pleaſure of this World to that fulneſs of joy, and thoſe unperiſhable pleaſures that are at Gods right hand for evermore? Oh! be aſhamed any longer to be thirſting after broken Ciſterns, and now let your hearts be carried out after heavenly Objects, after God in Chriſt, who alone is the Fountain of living Waters!* Hic pitiſſamus, illic deglutiemus; *Here we only ſip of the water of Life: but in Heaven we ſhall drink it up, though there be an Eternity to the bottom; Here we are ſons of hope, but when once Grace is ripened into Glory, then hope ſhall be ſwallowed up in fruition, and our hearts be as full of God, and all comforts in him, as we can deſire; Let therefore your hearts be wholly carried out after theſe glorious enjoyments, after God in Chriſt, after Heaven, and Eternal Glory.*

10. *And laſtly be ſure that not withſtanding all the diſcouragements attending a life of holineſs, you hold faſt your integrity, not pleading any difficulty or danger, againſt that you know to be duty. Affliction in the World is the portion of all that will live godlily*

in

in Chriſt Jeſus: So that, immunity from the reproach, malice, and perſecution of an ungrateful World, and the practical entertainment of Chriſt's Commandments, are no more conſiſtent than Light and Darkneſs. If you will be doing for Chriſt, you muſt alſo expect to be ſuffering from the World; and yet your ſufferings which you meet with from the World, cannot diſ-oblige you from doing for Chriſt. Seldom do men receive the Doctrine of Chriſt in the power of it, but Satan, and his wicked inſtruments, will be raiſing Perſecution againſt them: However, ſuch dangers and diſcouragements muſt never be pleaded againſt your Duty. A Chriſtian muſt rather conſult his Duty, than his own Safety; reſolving againſt the neglect of that, more than againſt any danger, any difficulties and diſcouragements, how many and great ſoever. Jeſus Chriſt is too great a Sovereign to be indented with; nor can you indeed be his Diſciples, if you walk not before him in all dutiful Obedience to his holy Will, whatever it coſts you. See therefore, my dear Friends, that you have alwayes an open Ear, a ready Hand, an obedient Heart, and a willing frame of Spirit to fall in with every Service, every Work, and Duty that the Lord ſhall call you forth to, though attended with never ſo many difficulties and diſcouragements. If ever you would obtain the happineſs of Heavenly-enjoyments, you muſt walk in all dutiful obedience before Chriſt, notwithſtanding all Earthly-diſcouragements. For, aſſure your ſelves, he that for fear of danger will not hear the Voice of Chriſt calling him to Duty, ſhall never ſee his Face in a ſtate of Glory. If the fear of a Temporal puniſhment ſtartle you, how much more ſhould you labour to be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, alwayes

abounding in the work of the Lord, to prevent an everlasting torment? Will you fear a Prison, and not Hell; the frowns of a man that must die, and not the wrath of that God who can cast both body and soul into Hell; the loss of life temporal, and not the loss of life everlasting? Is it not better that the Flesh should suffer a while, than be tormented for ever? to endure the Cross a while, than to lie under the Curse to all Eternity? Believe it, my Brethren, the nearer to God, the further from Danger; and your greatest safety lies alwayes in a way of Duty! Let no man ever think to be safe in a way of sin, nor promise himself freedom from that which is evil, by neglecting the performance of that which is good. For he only that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. Come then (my Brethren) what will come, in a way of Duty, Tempests or fair Weather, a Night of Adversity or a Sun-shine of Prosperity, Imprisonment or Liberty, Life or Death; yet be sure, you chearfully go forward therein, resolving to hold fast your integrity, whatever it expose you to.

Oh! let me beseech you, once for all, that you will resolve to follow Christ upon the Waters, and let not the Floods of persecution, or any affliction drown your zeal for his Glory; Through these bitter Waters of Marah, we shall come at length to the Wines of Paradise: Through this barren Wilderness, we shall come at length to the Heavenly Canaan; and for bearing his cross a while, Christ at length, will be sure to crown us with everlasting Glory.

What then, though your obedience to Christs Commandments, should expose you to reproach, persecution, Imprisonment, and the like calamities in this World; Yet consider, Is not that Crown, that Kingdom, that far

far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory, which ſhall ſhortly be beſtowed upon you, ſufficient to make amends for all? Though here you be ſowing in tears, yet anon you ſhall reap in joy. Though here your province ſhould be difficult, yet remember your reward is ſure; though you now lie among the pots, *mourning as Doves of the Valley; yet ere long, you ſhall be as the* wings of a Dove covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold, *Pſa.* 68. 13. *For your reproach in this World, you ſhall meet with glory in the next; For your ſhort conflict here, everlasting triumph hereafter; and though now for well-doing, you ſhould be afflicted and in miſery, yet anon you ſhall be advanced to an eternal, moſt glorious, and ſoul-ſatisfying felicity.*

And ſhall we then ſtartle, diſſemble conſcience, and decline our duty for that ſorrow which ſhall end in joy; for that croſs which leads to a crown, for that cloud of reproach, which anon ſhall be changed in a Sun-ſhine of eternal Glory? Aſſurance of a ſafe Harbour to a ſeafaring-man, of a fruitful Harveſt to the Husbandman, of a corruptible Crown to a Souldier, doth ſufficiently encourage them to break through all difficulties, with which their employments are attended: So, the aſſurance we have (if Chriſtians) of that Port of eternal Happineſs, of that Harveſt of everlaſting joys in Gods preſence, of that immarceſcible triumphal crown of Glory; ſhould, in this our ſeed-time of tears, in this our ſeafaring condition, in this our ſpiritual warfar, encourage us to walk before Chriſt, *in all dutiful obedience to his holy will, making us reſolve to hold faſt our integrity at the deareſt rate.*

But having more largely inſiſted upon theſe things

in the following Sermons, I ſhall no longer detain you: Onely let me earneſtly beg, that in all your addreſſes to the Throne of Grace, you would never forget to breathe out one heart's-groan for him, who is ambitious of no greater honour, than to be and ſubſcribe himſelf

Yours to ſerve you, whilſt cloathed with mortality, in the everlaſting Goſpel of our Lords moſt glorious Kingdom.

J. C.

1 Pet.

1 Pet. 5. 14.

Peace be with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus, Amen.

WHat our bleſſed Lord, going out of the World, bequeathed as a choiſe Legacy to all his Diſciples, which was, *The Peace of God that paſſeth all underſtanding*; the ſame doth our bleſſed Apoſtle, concluding his whole Epiſtle in the words of my Text, ſolemnly intitle all thoſe to, who are truly united unto Chriſt, and made one with him.

For, having driven that excellent and bleſſed Deſign, which in this Epiſtle he had upon thoſe Strangers to whom he wrote, to a full period; aſſuring them that the Faith wherein they ſtood was the true Grace of God: he ſhuts up his whole diſcourſe with the words of my Text, and therein leaves his Apoſtolical Benediction upon them, ſaying, *Peace be with you all, that are in Chriſt Jeſus, Amen.*

In which words, that I may not hold you longer in the porch, there being nothing in them that ſpeaks any dependance upon, or connexion with, any thing that went before; you may obſerve theſe Two things conſiderable.

1. A Benediction pronounced; *Peace*, &c..
2. The ratification thereof annexed, *Amen.*

In the Benediction you have also these Two Particulars.

1. The Matter of the Apostles benediction, *Peace.*
2. The Persons upon whom it is pronounced, *those that are in Christ Jesus.*

Having first explained the words as they lie in order, we shall give you the Observation.

Peace.] 'Tis a word of a very large and comprehensive signification, as implying an universal confluence of all good things, together with an aggregation of whatever might tend to the making of a man compleatly happy. As for the thing it self, we are to know, There is a three-fold peace spoken of in holy Writ; *with God, with our selves,* and *with men* amongst whom we converse. Peace *with men,* is by all lawful means to be pursued; *with our selves,* it is much to be desired; but *with God,* it is absolutely necessary, would we ever be happy. Though therefore we exclude neither peace with our selves, nor peace with men amongst whom we converse; yet that which we pitch upon, as chiefly intended by our Apostle in this place, is, Peace and reconciliation with the God of Heaven.

Be with you all that are in Christ.] Though our Apostle would not deny the comfort of this his Apostolick benediction to whom it belonged; yet he durst not intitle any thereto, but such as had an interest in it, and such are only the living members of Christ, his mystical body. There is peace and reconciliation with the God

of

of Heaven to be had, not indeed promiſcuouſly of all, but of thoſe alone, and of all thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus, not by external profeſſion, but by an internal and ſpiritual implantation.

Amen.] The word is originally Hebrew, ſignifying *So it is*, or *So be it*: but yet it is continued in all languages, and by the uſe of it, as familiar, and well known as moſt other Engliſh words. For the uſe of it in this place, it ſpeaks forth not only the Apoſtle's earneſt deſire that the peace of God might become the portion of all that are in Chriſt Jeſus: but withal, his holy confidence, his plerophory, and full aſſurance that it ſhould be ſo, giving us thereby to learn this comfortable point of Doctrine.

Doct. *That all ſuch as are in Chriſt Jeſus, have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for their portion.* The Soul is no longer at ods with God the Father, when once it is made one with God the Son. The foundation of our peace with God, is our union with Jeſus Chriſt; and where once this foundation is laid, they are no longer counted enemies, but the friends of God. Though by nature we are all at enmity againſt God; yet being once ingrafted into Chriſt, the enmity of our natures is aboliſhed, and a ſweet peace betwixt God, and our Souls, concluded.

In the proſecution of which Doctrine, having firſt ſhewed you when a man may be ſaid to be in Chriſt Jeſus; I ſhall give you the *Reaſons* why thoſe that are in Chriſt muſt needs have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for their portion; and ſo paſs to the practical improve-

ment of the whole by way of Uſe and Application.

Firſt, Then, I am to let you underſtand when a man may be ſaid to be in Chriſt Jeſus: and that is in theſe and the like caſes, of which I beſeech you to take ſpecial notice, becauſe ſo many deceive themſelves, thinking they are Chriſt's, when indeed they are ſtill in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity.

1. When a man hath the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus ſavingly dwelling in him. By Nature we are all eſtranged from Chriſt; but through the Spirit of Chriſt we are quickned, and engrafted into him. Whoſoever hath the Spirit of Chriſt ſavingly in him, may truly be ſaid to be *in him*. For the Spirit of Chriſt is the ſole author and efficient cauſe of our being in Chriſt, and of our union with him. By this one Spirit it is that we are all of us baptized into one body, 1*Cor*.12.13.

So then they that have not the Spirit of Chriſt ſavingly dwelling in them, they are none of Chriſts, nor can they truly be ſaid to be in Chriſt, as being ſtill in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity. For ſaith the Apoſtle, *Hereby know we that we dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*, 1 Joh. 4. 13. Whatever member is really united to the Head, hath a Soul, enlivening of it, and acting in it: So, there is no man truly united to Chriſt as his Head, but by the Spirit of Chriſt quickning of him, and effectually working in him.

2. When a man by Faith is united to, and effectually made one with Chriſt Jeſus. By Faith

Chriſt

Chriſt is united to Believers, and Believers to Him: He dwells in their Hearts by Faith; and by Faith they have a being, and live in him, *Gal.* 2. 20. Whatever the Spirit of Chriſt on his part doth before for the uniting of us to Chriſt, yet certainly Faith is the Hand on our part that receives, and the band that faſteneth Chriſt to us: Hereby it is that we touch the head of the golden Scepter; this is the hand which puts us into Chriſt as a ſpiritual *Bethesda*, for the healing of all our diſtempers.

So then, a man may be ſaid to be in Chriſt when by Faith he is united to Chriſt, and made one with him: when by Faith he entertains Chriſt into his Soul, reſting fiducially upon him, entirely truſting him both with Soul, and Salvation.

Secondly, I am to give you the Reaſons why ſuch as are in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt needs have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for their portion.

1. Becauſe for all ſuch, Jeſus Chriſt hath made full ſatisfaction to divine Juſtice. Though once there was a bleſſed peace and agreement betwixt God and Man; yet man through his Apoſtacy from God, hath diſſolved that bleſſed agreement, and thereby provoked the Lord to become his enemy.

And however, God, out of his wonderful *Philanthropy* to Mankind, be inclined to be reconciled to the Children of men, and again to receive them into favour: yet in order to all this he ſtands upon ſatisfaction to offended Juſtice, reſolving that he will never be at peace with us, till

till that be given. God hath revealed himſelf to be an holy, Sin-hating, and righteous God, to be angry with the wicked every day, and one that will by no means acquit the guilty: Now then, to make up this breach, and reconcile us unto God, Jeſus Chriſt ſteps in, takes the chaſtiſement of our peace upon him, and gives full ſatisfaction to Divine Juſtice, by ſuffering for all his people whatever their ſins had demerited at the hands of God, *Iſa.* 53. 5.

Though then it will not ſtand with the Majeſty of God, to be at peace with us till ſatisfaction be given to offended Juſtice; yet Chriſt having ſatisfied his Juſtice, by undergoing the ſtroke thereof, What ſhould hinder their peace with the God of Heaven for whom Chriſt intended all this?

Be Juſtice never ſo ſevere, let it have never ſo dreadful a quarrel, and ſo implacable a controverſie with ſinners whilſt unſatisfied; yet Chriſt having given it ſatisfaction for all that ſhould be living members of his Myſtical Body, it will readily ſet hand and ſeal to their acquittance, and be ſo far from pleading againſt them, that it turns their Advocate; and becauſe Chriſt hath made an Attonement, all ſuch as are truly in him muſt needs be received into favour, and have peace with God.

2 *Becauſe* all ſuch as are truly in Chriſt, they ſtand juſtified in the ſight of God. Not only hath Chriſt given ſatisfaction to offended juſtice for all that are in him, but this ſatisfaction is alſo pleadable by every ſoul in Chriſt Jeſus, as being actually made his own through faith in Chriſt,

Christ, so that appearing thus before God the Father, in the Garments of his Elder Brother, he obtaines and cannot but obtain, the blessing of peace at Gods hands, *Rom.* 5. 7. So then the chief thing in Justification, and that which most naturally flowes from it, is, the removal of the enmity betwixt all those that are justified, and the God of Heaven.

We are by nature darkness, and God is light; we are guiltiness, and God is all justice; we are all in a word as dry stubble, and God a consuming fire; but now being justified by faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ, all this contrariety and distance is done away, and the peace of God it becomes our portion. So that being justified by Faith, as all those are that are truly in Christ, and made one with him, God looks upon us no longer as enemies, but as friends; not as objects of his hatred, but as objects of his good-will, of his love, and his special favour.

3. Because for all such as are truly in him, Jesus Christ is an Advocate interceding for them, and improving his interest with God the Father in their behalf. Tis true, the Justice of God once violated, becomes inexorable, till satisfaction be given: but now, because Christ hath fully answered the demands of Divine Justice, He may urge the Lord, upon the account of his own satisfactory merits, to be propitious to all that are in him, to receive them into favour with himself, and be reconciled to them, *John* 17.

Now then, how should such be estranged from God, and the objects of his hatred, who have Christ interceding for them, upon the account of

of his own righteouſneſs, that God would acquit them from the guilt of all their ſins, that God would no longer frown, but ſmile upon them, that God would no more count them his enemies, but his friends and favourites.

Oh what ſtrong and everlaſting conſolation, may juſtly accrew to every ſoul in *Chriſt*, from this conſideration, that Chriſt is interceding for them, and urging the Lord upon the account of his own righteouſneſs, to be at peace with them!

Tis a great advantage to have one pleading for us at the bar, who is in favour with the Bench: well, Jeſus Chriſt is in favour with the bench; the Lord whoſe juſtice we have violated, and whoſe wrath we have provoked, is our Advocate's Friend and Father, yea and ſuch a Father as never denyed him any thing, Who then that is truly in Chriſt, can deſpair of the peace of God and reconciliation with him for his portion?

Fear not, Chriſtians, the God of Heaven regards the young Ravens that cry unto him, he will not altogether neglect the humiliation of an hypocritical *Ahab*, nor is he at all backward to anſwer the prayers of his people: and will he not much more regard the prayers of his dearly beloved Son interceding for thy peace, thy pardon, thy reconciliation with him, and all upon the account of his own ſatisfactory, and all-ſufficient Merits.

4. And laſtly, becauſe all ſuch as are truly in Chriſt, have the enmity that was in their natures againſt the God of Heaven aboliſhed, and are fitted for communion with him. No ſooner

is

is a man in Chriſt, but the dominion of ſin is caſt down, and he becomes a new creature, his nature is now throughly ſanctified, and all thoſe corruptions that were as ſo many weapons of rebellion againſt God, are mortally wounded.

Every man by nature is all over filthy, unclean, polluted, and full of enmity againſt the God of Heaven: but that a peace betwixt God and our ſouls, may be concluded, Jeſus Chriſt, by his Spirit, deſtroys the enmity that is in us againſt God, cleanſeth us from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and ſo makes us holy, as God is holy.

Now then, though ſuch a thing as this, cannot merit the bleſſing of Peace, and Reconciliation with God: yet it fits and qualifies a man that he may receive the peace of God, and reconcilia- with him, as his portion.

Nor is there indeed any thing elſe in the World, that can render us uncapable of the peace of God, but only the ſinfulneſs of our natures, together with that hatred, enmity, and contrariety that is bound up in our hearts againſt him, *Rom.* 8. 7.

Sin is the great Make-bate between Heaven, and Earth; This is that Apple of contention, which the old Serpent hath thrown betwixt the God of Heaven, and the children of Men. God for ſin hated us, and we through ſin hate God: But now, ſo ſoon as ever we are in Chriſt, we become new creatures, Chriſt making us of dead, alive unto God, of Proud, humble, of Ignorant wiſe to Salvation, of Unclean, pure, and of Sinful, holy, and in all things conformable to Gods holy Will.

So

So then, God ſeeing his own Image thus repaired in us, he can no longer be wroth with us, but will receive us into a ſtate of friendſhip and reconciliation with himſelf.

Thirdly, Having thus given you the reaſons, why every ſoul in Chriſt, hath the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for his portion; We now come to make ſome improvement of it, by way of *Uſe and Application.*

Firſt. By way of Information, we may here infer.

1. How ſad and dreadful the condition of all ſuch is, as are out of Chriſt, and eſtranged from him: If ſuch as are in Chriſt, have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for their portion, then for thoſe that are out of Chriſt, what portion can they expect, but Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, as having God for their enemy? God never was in any but Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf; you therefore that are out of Chriſt, are ſtill at enmity with God, and have neither part nor lot in the reconciliation purchaſed by Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19.

Now, is this, *I* beſeech you, a condition to be reſted in? can you think that God is your enemy, and his Wiſdom, and Power, and Wrath, is engaged to take vengeance upon you, and yet be ſecure? What though the Stranger ſhall wiſh thee peace in the morning? What though thy Neighbour ſhould ſalute thee with peace? What though thy dear Relations, ſhall pray for thy peace? What if in the Church, thou hear the glad tidings of peace, and thou receiveſt the Sa-

Sacrament, a ſign of peace! Yet know, not being united to Chriſt, and ſo made one with him, thou haſt no Peace; no True, no Heavenly, no Spiritual peace; but the wrath of an angry *God*, it abideth upon thee, *Iſa.* 57. 21.

And do you know of a certainty the terrour of Gods wrath, and the fierceneſs of his indignation? Do you know that none can ſtand in *Gods* preſence, when once he is angry; and that his anger, if kindled but a little, will conſume you like ſtubble? Do you know that there is a time coming, when *God* will eaſe himſelf of his enemies, and take vengeance upon all his Adverſaries? How is it then, that you ſee not the miſery of all ſuch as provoke him to jealouſie, not endeavouring to be found of him in peace? 2 *Pet.* 3. 14.

Oh when will you once be wiſe, to conſider how fearful a thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living *God*! *Heb.* 12. 31. None can puniſh their enemies as God can; the whole creation takes part with *God*; if *God* be angry, he can arm the leaſt creature to kill you; the clouds are lined with wrath, the very Heavens themſelves, every moment, are ready to diſcharge Gods Thunder-bolts upon you; and having killed your body, he is able to torment you, both body and ſoul in Hell, for ever.

Judge then within your ſelves, if the condition of every ſoul out of Chriſt, be not ſad and deplorable! Such ſouls have that *God* for their enemy, who can command fire to ſcorch them, brimſtone to choak them, conſcience to torment them, devils to wrack them, and all the flames

of

of Hell to ſeize on them, and burn them for ever! Why then will you reſt a moment longer, in a Chriſtleſs condition? Shall we daily ſpeak and admoniſh you of theſe things, and yet will you ſtill continue out of Chriſt, as if it were but a trifle to be damned? As if to be found an enemy to the God of Heaven, to lie under his wrath, and frowns, and heavy diſpleaſures to all Eternity, were but a trifle! But alas poor fooliſh ſinners! when God ſhall ſtir up all his wrath, come to plead with you in flaming Fire, and empty all the Vials of his indignation upon you, that ſhall burn to the loweſt Hell; Oh! then with what bitter howlings and lamentations, with what briniſh tears, and rivers of blood, will you bewail to all Eternity, your own folly, that you did not foreſee the danger, the miſery of a Chriſtleſs condition!

2. How great the ſafety of all that are truly in Chriſt, and made one with him, is; Such have God on their ſid, and if *God be for them, who can be againſt them? Rom.* 8. 31. Gods people have many enemies, but ſo long as God is their friend, they need not fear them. The fleſh from within, and the world, and Satan from without, make war upon them: but becauſe they are at peace with God, and have him for their friend, they are ſure at the laſt, to be more than conquerours, *Rom.* 8. 37. *Nemo nos lædit, niſi qui Deum vincit.* Gods Wiſdom, his Power, and Faithfulneſs, are all of them engaged for thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, and made one with him, ſo that there is nothing in all the World, that can hurt them, unleſs they had an enemy that could

could nonplus the Wiſdom of God, out-vie him in power, and reduce him to ſuch ſtraits, as to make him forfeit his faithfulneſs, which ſhall never fail.

Oh then, how great is the ſafety of all thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, and made one with him! Let who will make war againſt them, yet becauſe they are at peace with God, they can never hurt them. The hearts of all men are in Gods hand, he can either deſtroy their perſons, or reſtrain their rage; ſo that, let them intend what miſchief they will, they ſhall never act it; Let them threaten, yet they ſhall not execute; Let them make war upon his people, yet having God for their Friend, they are out of Gun-ſhot: For God is the beſt ſhield, and the beſt ſafegard that any man can have. *His Name is a ſtrong Tower*, where all that are at peace with him, may find ſafety, *Prov.9.*

Though then there were a confederacy, a multitude of combined enemies, againſt you that are at peace with God, making it their great deſigne how to ruin, and deſtroy you: Yet be not afraid of their terrour, perplex not your ſelves with needleſs fears; you have a God for your Friend, that is ſtronger than all, who can arm Lice, and Flies, and the ſmalleſt contingency, and make the leaſt of them, rout a whole hoſt of *Egyptians*.

Secondly; By way of Examination, let this make us put our ſelves upon the Teſt, and with diligence examine our hearts, whether yet we be in Chriſt, or out of Chriſt, whether united to him, or eſtranged from him? Trivial mat-

ters, my friends, you may lightly paſs over; but a matter of ſo great and everlaſting conſequence, as your intereſt in Chriſt, ſhould be ſeriouſly minded. Can we therefore ſay, Chriſt lives in us, and we in him, that our ſouls are united to Chriſt, and made one with him? Thouſands in the World that lay claim to Chriſt, are yet in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bonds of iniquity: Let not any of us put ſuch a cheat upon our ſelves; Oh! let us not ſit down ſatisfied without a well-grounded aſſurance, that we are in Chriſt, and made one with him, that in Chriſt we have *the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding*, and reconciliation with him, for our portion! But becauſe the reſolution of this query, Whether we have this peace of God and reconciliation with him for our portion, depends upon this, whether or no we live in Chriſt, or Chriſt in us, therefore make proof of your being in Chriſt; by theſe following ſignes.

1. All thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, are become new creatures, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. The ſame ſubſtance of ſoul and body, together with all the natural powers and faculties of body do remain: but a man, being once in Chriſt, is endued with new qualities of holineſs, and all the powers both of ſoul and body, are now ſanctified; For whereas before he in was Chriſt, his underſtanding was darkned, now it is ſo enlightned, that a man can underſtand the things of the Spirit of God; whereas before a man was in Chriſt, his will was rebellious, now it is ſo far ſubdued, that he readily becomes obedient to the will of God; whereas, before a man was in Chriſt, his conſci-

ence

ence, memory, thoughts, and affections, were all of them earthly, dead, and eſtranged from God, now they are awakened, and made holy, ſpiritual, and heavenly. Whereas, in a word, before a man was in Chriſt, his ſenſes were ſervants of ſin; and his members, inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs; Now, his ſenſes are ſervants of Grace, and his members inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto God, *Rom.* 6. 13.

Now then, do you find ſuch a change as this wrought upon you? are old things paſſed away, and all things become new with you? Is your underſtanding, your will, your affections, your ſenſes, and your members ſo renewed, that now you know what concerns your everlaſting Peace, and are wiſe to Salvation; now, you willingly walk before God in all dutiful Obedience to his holy Will; now you can love Holineſs, which you formerly hated? Now you can prize Chriſt whom you formerly deſpiſed; now, you can grieve for ſin, in which you formerly delighted; now, you can rejoyce in the favour of God, which you formerly made light of; Now, you have your ſenſes exerciſed to chooſe the good, and refuſe the evil; Now, in a word, you can *yield your members ſervants to Righteouſneſs, unto Holineſs, Rom.* 6. 19.

2. All thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, are in all things ſubject to him as their Head, and that with all willingneſs, alacrity, and chearfulneſs of ſpirit. All thoſe that are in Chriſt, are as living members of his own body: And what in all the World is more natural, than for members with all readineſs to execute what the head com-

mands? Ask therefore your own hearts, Is Chriſt's yoke irkſome and tedious, or do you find it eaſie? Are his commandments grievous, ſuch as it grudges you to ſubmit to? or do you willingly yield obedience to them? Oh put, I beſeech you, the caſe home to your own ſouls, if you would not be miſtaken. Doth Chriſt rule in you, or doth Self, and Satan? Are you glad with his Sovereignty, or is it a yoke that you cannot bear? Do the Laws of Chriſts Kingdom, bear ſway in your hearts? or is it the Law of your members and carnal intereſt? When the commands of Chriſt, and the commands of ſin come in competition, Which of theſe, in the courſe of your life, do you moſt commonly fulfil? To which of them do you commonly hearken with moſt willingneſs, delight, and chearfulneſs of heart?

Such perſons as are eſtranged from Chriſt, they are neither univerſal in their obedience to his commands, nor yet chearful in what they do: but now ſuch as are truly in him, what ever he commands, they do it, and that not grudgingly, but with a willing mind. It is not grievous to members to obey their Head; nor are the commands of Chriſt, grievous to ſuch as are living members of his myſtical body, 1 *John.* 5. 3.

If then you be truly in Chriſt; like the Centurions ſervants, when ever Chriſt calls you, you will come; when ever he ſends you forth, you will go; and what ever he bids you do, you will readily ſet about it!

3. All ſuch as are truly in Chriſt, will not allow of any ſin in themſelves, but labour to crucifie the fleſh, with all its inordinate luſts, and affections,

affections, *Gal.* 5. 24. Chriſt our Head, was crucified for the ſins of his Members: all ſuch therefore as are living Members of his myſtical body, muſt crucifie their ſins, not ſuffering that to live, for which Chriſt died.

They know that Light and Darkneſs have no communion, that Chriſt and *Belial*, can never dwell together in one heart: and therefore they are ſick of the leaſt ſin, they ſtrive againſt it; and, as a living Fountain works out the mud that falls into it, ſo they labour to work out all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and are never at reſt, till they have broken the heart of every luſt, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1.

Thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, and made one with him, dare not allow themſelves in any the leaſt ſin: as a loyal Wife allows of no ſtrange lover in her boſom: but their great care is to get rid of every luſt, and to keep their heart, as an holy Temple, for Chriſt to dwell in.

Examine therefore your ſelves, I beſeech you, by this ſigne; what care have you hitherto been at, to crucifie the fleſh, with all its inordinate affections and luſts? what care to get rid of ſin, and to keep your ſelves from your own iniquity? Have you the Teſtimony of your conſciences bearing you witneſs, that you have a mortal deſigne againſt every ſin, and that you allow not your ſelves in any the leaſt iniquity?

4. All ſuch as are truly in Chriſt, are deeply affected with, what ever indignities are offered to Chriſt, and will willingly expoſe themſelves to danger, to ſecure and vindicate his glory, as in the natural body; if the Head be in dan-

ger, the hand will ſecure it, though with its own diſadvantage: ſo in the myſtical body of Chriſt, thoſe that are living Members thereof, they will, when ever his Glory, his Honour, his Intereſt lies at ſtake, labour to ſecure that, what ever it coſt them.

The man that is indeed united to Chriſt, and made one with him, he will rather loſe his eſtate, he will rather loſe his liberty, he will rather loſe his credit, yea, he will rather loſe life it ſelf, than that Chriſt ſhould loſe one beam of his Glory, rather than that the intereſt of Chriſt ſhould fall through his want of zeal, to aſſert it in the World.

How therefore are your hearts affected with thoſe manifold indignities, that are offered to Chriſt, and what is your zeal to vindicate his honour, his intereſt, his cauſe, from the violence of ungodly men, that have ſacrilegiouſly laid hands upon it?

Do the reproaches of ſuch as reproach Chriſt, his Wayes, his Goſpel, his Ordinances, fall upon you? and are you deeply affected therewith?

When ever the cauſe of Chriſt ſuffers and his glory lies at the Stake, do you find your ſelves ſo much concerned therein, that to promote his intereſt, and redeem his glory, you could willingly run the hazard of loſing Goods, and Lands, and Houſes, and Relations, and Liberty, and Life it ſelf?

5. All ſuch as are truly in Chriſt, they will labour to walk as he walked, propoſing his Life, his Obedience, his Example, to themſelves for imi-

imitation. Such perſons, are his walking Pictures; they ſtrive to reſemble him, in meekneſs, and charity, and purity, and holineſs, as knowing that the Members muſt needs be conformable to their Head. Try then, I beſeech you, your ſelves by this ſign; cauſes are beſt known by their effects, Trees by their fruit, Fountains by their ſtreams: So you may know whether you be in Chriſt, by the effects thereof, your conformity to him.

Is therefore the ſame mind in you, that was in Chriſt? Haſt thou denied thy ſelf, as thy Head did before thee? Doſt thou daily take up thy croſs, art thou holy and humble, and, in all things, a follower of the Pattern which Chriſt hath ſet before thee, in his own example?

Oh Chriſtians! How did Chriſt pray, and redeem time for that holy Exerciſe? At what a low rate did Chriſt value the world, who did and taught to renounce it? How did Chriſt go up and down, doing good to Man, and alwayes thoſe things that were pleaſing in the ſight of God? *John* 8. 28.

Whether therefore, in theſe, and the like holy Exerciſes, have you ſtudied conformity with him? or have you walked directly Antipodes, and contrary to him?

6. All thoſe that are truly in Chriſt, have their hearts drawn out after Him, as the moſt excellent, deſirable, and lovely Object in all the World. Whoever are truly in Chriſt, are believing Souls. Now that ſight which Faith gives them of the excellency of Chriſt, and their miſery without him, it makes him ineſtimably pre-

cious, and the very thoughts of him ſweet to the Soul, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7.

Honours are ſweet to the Ambitious man, Pleaſures are ſweet to the Voluptuous man, and Riches are ſweet to the Covetous man: but Chriſt infinitely ſurpaſſeth them all in ſweetneſs, to ſuch as are living Members of his Myſtical Body. *Cant.* 2. 3. *As the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood* (ſaith the Spouſe) *ſo is my Beloved among the Sons of men. I ſate down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte.* Chriſt is ineſtimably precious, and every thing of Chriſt is exceeding ſweet to all that are truly in him. The knowledge of Chriſt is ſweet to their Underſtanding, as the light is ſweet to the Eye. The love of Chriſt is ſweet to their Souls, as the Wine is ſweet to the taſte. The Preſence of Chriſt is ſweet unto them, as the Bridegroom's preſence is ſweet to the Bride. There is nothing in all the world that they prize at ſo high a rate, that they love ſo dearly, that their hearts are carried out after ſo ſtrongly, and that they ſo ſweetly delight in, as Jeſus Chriſt.

As the people eſteemed *David*, ſo they eſteem Chriſt better than all their thouſands; whether Honours, Riches, Liberty, Life, or whatſoever elſe: He is to them as the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood, as the Jewel among the Droſs, as the Sun among the Stars, as the Fountain in whom their Souls find all ſatisfaction! *Cant.* 5. 13.

Now therefore, how find you your hearts affected

fected towards Jesus Christ? Do you, with the Spouse, esteem the Love of Christ better than Wine; with *David*, better than life? And, can you, in the midst of all your creature-comforts, account them all as loss, as nothing in comparison of him; and say, as the *Psalmist* once did, *Whom have I in Heaven but Christ, and there is none on Earth that I desire, in comparison of him? Psal.* 73. 25.

7. All such as are truly in Christ, will abound with the fruits of Righteousness. Every branch in Christ, its a fruit-bearing branch; and to be sure, all such as are barren amongst you, are estranged from Christ, *Joh.*15.5.

Are therefore your Souls as a spiritual *Eshcol*, filled with manie bunches of ripe Grapes, with all the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the Glorie of God?

Are you filled with all the Fulness of God, or at least, do you strive to be fruitful in every good Word, and Work? *Col.* 1. 10.

8. And lastly, All that are in Christ, as living Members of his Mystical Body, have set their Affections on things above. As their being is in Christ, so they have their hearts carried out after those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, *Col.*3.1.

Such as are indeed united to Christ, they do not live as those that take the world for their portion: but they declare by their words and actions, that they seek another country, *Heb.*11.

Men that are estranged from Christ, they lie groveling upon the Earth, and all their care is how to be great, and rich, and honourable in the world:

world: but now, all those that are in Christ, their conversation is in Heaven; though they are in the World, yet they are above the World, studying how to lay up for themselves a treasure in Heaven, and longing at last to be lodged in the bosom of their blessed Redeemer, *Phil.*3.20.

A man may live in one place, and yet drive on his Trade in another: So those that are in Christ, though they live in the World, yet they trade above the World; they are Merchants for the Pearl of great price: Every day they are trafficking for Heaven, and Glory.

Ask then your own hearts the question, Have you laid your Design as high as Heaven? Do you live as those that look for a City that hath Foundations, whose builder, and maker is God? Do you not inordinately love, and grasp after this present world? but is your heart, your desires, and all your delight, in those things that are above? Are you not too much taken with the dross and peebles of the world; but do your Souls fly higher, fixing themselves upon Pearls, upon God in Christ, upon Heaven, and the glory of the World to come?

Oh examine (I beseech you) your selves by this sign! The Affections are the truest pulse of the Soul; the most genuine and proper language of its frame and temper: 'Tis these that speak the proper *idiom* and language of the heart; and so, clearly discover, whether a man be in Christ, or estranged from him. If then you find your Affections fixed on things above, if your hearts are full of Heaven, and all your desires run out that way, so that you long to get out of the crowd

crowd of worldly buſineſs, to rid your hands of all earthly encumbrances, and to reſt with Chriſt in eternal Manſions of Glory; this argues indeed that you are already in Chriſt, and that being made living members of his Myſtical body, you have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for your portion!

Thirdly, By way of *Exhortation*, ſhall I prevail with all you that are out of Chriſt, and eſtranged from him, to labour with all your might for an intereſt in him.

You have heard what the priviledge of being in Chriſt is; all ſuch as are made one with him have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for their portion: And ſhall not ſo glorious a priviledge, ſhall not a benefit of ſuch great and everlaſting conſequence, make you ſtrive for an intereſt in Chriſt?

But, that I may not leave you unperſwaded, give me leave a little to acquaint you with the ſad and deplorable condition of every Chriſtleſs Soul.

1. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no life; but art dead to this day in treſpaſſes and ſins, *Epheſ.* 2. 1.

A member ſeparated from the body, hath no life; ſo every Soul out of Chriſt is dead, whilſt he lives, the death of ſin bears dominion over him. As *Lazarus* remained dead in the grave till Chriſt came, and raiſed him: So doth every man in the grave of ſin, till Chriſt make him a living member of his own body, raiſing him from the Death of Sin, to the Life of Grace, 1 *Joh.* 5. 12.

And

And can you ſatisfie your ſelves thus, to be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? or can you think of obtaining life, without coming to Chriſt?

Go you may to your creature-enjoyments, but can any of them deliver your Souls from Death, and breathe the Spirit of life into them?

Oh, with what fear, with what aſtoniſhment and trembling may this juſtly fill every Chriſtleſs man and woman among us! Being eſtranged from Chriſt, thou art a dead ſoul; dead in ſin for the preſent, and for ſin muſt thou die eternally, and for ever periſh, if thou come not to Chriſt that he may quicken thee, that he may breathe the ſpirit of Life, and Grace into thee!

2. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no freedom, but art held captive in a ſpiritual bondage. It is only Chriſt that miniſters freedom to poor ſouls from ſin, and liberty to true holineſs: So then, being out of Chriſt, thou haſt no freedom to what is good, but art a ſlave to the World, to the Devil, and thy own corruptions, *Joh.*8.36.

Liberty indeed you have to what is evil, but no liberty to what is good; Liberty you have to wound your ſelf, but no liberty to ſeek out for a plaiſter; Liberty, in a word, you have to chuſe ſuch things as will damne you, but no liberty to make choiſe of what may promote the ſalvation of your Souls, ſo long as you remain eſtranged from Chriſt!

Oh then, How dreadfully aſtoniſhing may this be to every Chriſtleſs ſoul, and what an argument to make them look out for an intereſt in him?

We

We count it a ſad condition to be held captives of the *Turk*, and made Gally-ſlaves of: Oh, but how much ſadder is their condition, who are taken captive of the *Devil* at his will and pleaſure, who ſerve in the drudgery of ſin, and have liberty to do nothing but what is like to damn them, to deſtroy, and undo them for ever! 2 *Tim.*2.26.

3. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no Juſtification; but the guilt of all thy ſin, it lies upon thee. The priviledge of Juſtification flowes only from Chriſt: When ever God gives a pardon to any poor ſoul, abſolving him from the guilt of all his ſins, he ſeals it in the blood of Chriſt, *Acts* 13.39.

So then, you that are ſtill out of Chriſt, and eſtranged from him, what will you do, how will you ever be able to look God in the face, how can you ſtand in the day of Judgment, and wherewith will you come before Him to appeaſe the righteous Judge of all the World, and obtain your pardon? Were you in Chriſt as living members of his myſtical body, his Righteouſneſs would remove your Guilt, Chriſt himſelf would plead your cauſe, and give you a pardon: but becauſe you are out of Chriſt, you muſt be reſponſible to Juſtice in your own perſon; the curſe will take hold upon you, and the guilt of your ſins, it will ſink you to the loweſt Hell!

4. Conſider, Being out of Chriſt thou haſt no content, but remaineſt unſatisfied in the midſt of all thy creature-enjoyments. It is not the abundance of any thing, but Chriſt coming along with it, that gives content, whether the thing

thing be little or much. Christ is the fulneſs, and ſweetneſs of all our enjoyments: Separate Christ from them, and they are emptie and do not fill us; yea, they are bitter, and do not pleaſe us.

It is not the having of Riches, nor the having of Honours, nor the having of Friends in the world, but the having of Christ in theſe, that can give content to the ſoul, and make it ſit down ſatisfied.

Without Christ, the bed is a bed of thorns, the bread is full of gravel, and the cup is full of gall; Nothing filleth, nothing ſatisfieth, but every thing vexeth, diſpleaſeth, leaveth a ſting behind it; and the heart, like the horſe-leeche's daughters, cries, *Give, Give*, and can never have enough, *Prov.* 30. 15.

Oh then, what an Argument ſhould this be, provoking you to ſeek out for an intereſt in Christ! Your riches, your honours, and all your creature-enjoyments, they are not food, but fuel to your deſires; and ſo far from ſatisfying, that they encreaſe your hunger. Though they promiſe to eaſe you of cares, yet they do but multiply them; like drink to a dropſical man, inſtead of ſlacking, you will find them enflaming your thirſt.

Cauſe hunger they may, but they cannot ſatisfie; kindle thirſtings they may, but they can quench none; a thouſand feares and cares they will create you, but they can quiet none. So long as you are out of Christ, you muſt never expect ſatisfaction, nor look for contentment in any thing that you have!

5. Con-

5. Conſider, Being out of Chriſt, thou haſt no redemption; but art a ſtranger to whatever Chriſt purchaſed by his Death, and Paſſion. Though Chriſt were as extenſive, and univerſal a cauſe of Redemption, as ſome would have him, yet no man can actually receive anie benefit by Him, till by Faith he be united to Chriſt, and made one with him.

What the better was it for the old World that they had an Ark, ſo long as they did not get into it? So, what the better is it for you that are out of Chriſt, that he hath brought in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, that he hath ſatisfied Divine Juſtice, that he hath vanquiſhed Death, and Hell, and all the powers of Darkneſs, ſo long as you get not an intereſt in him?

As the caſe ſtands with you, the blood of Chriſt may plead againſt you; but can never plead for you. The Death of Chriſt may aggravate your Miſerie; but will never procure you Mercie: It may encreaſe the wrath of God againſt you, and ſink you the deeper in Hell; but to be ſure it will never deliver your ſouls from the wrath to come, nor open you a paſſage into Heavenly Glorie!

Oh then, how dreadful muſt be the condition of everie Chriſtleſs ſoul! Such have neither part, nor lot, in the Redemption purchaſed by Jeſus Chriſt. Though he have died, and ſhed his blood, to redeem poor ſouls from death, and hell, and the wrath to come; yet thoſe that are out of him, their condition is as ſad and deplorable for the preſent, as if all this had never been! Oh then, as ever you deſire to partake

of

of the Redemption purchaſed, by Chriſt, as ever you would reap any benefit by his Death and Paſſion, be no longer eſtranged from him, but labour that you may get an intereſt in him!

6. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no acceptance with God, but in all that thou doſt, or canſt do, God frowns upon thee. Who ever is accepted of God, its in Chriſt his beloved: thoſe therefore that are out of Chriſt, they bear not Gods Image, nor do they appear before him in the rich Robes of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, and cannot upon that account, find acceptance at his hands, in any thing that they do.

Joſeph's Brethren might not look him in the face, without bringing *Benjamin* along with them: So if you bring not Chriſt along with you, if you appear not before God in Chriſt, you may not ſee his face, you ſhall never find acceptance with him, do what you can.

Oh then, that the Lord may accept you in all that you do, that when you come before him with broken prayers, he may ſpell out your meaning, and take all your performances, how weak and imperfect ſo ever, in good part! See that you labour for an intereſt in Chriſt, to be united to Chriſt, and made one with him, in whom the Lord is well pleaſed! *Mat.* 3. 17.

7. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no comfort, but remaineſt diſconſolate; Chriſt alone is the conſolation of *Iſrael*: You then that are out of Chriſt, your condition muſt needs be diſconſolate, *Luke* 2. 25. If Chriſt be not yours, no comfort in the Word of God is yours.

Oh then, that you may not live without comfort,

fort, and die diſconſolate, be ſure that you get an intereſt in Chriſt!

This only will comfort your ſouls, and bear up your ſpirits in time of diſtreſs: but for all your worldly comforts, they will be your torment, if you be not found in Chriſt, when Death approaches.

For, what are all the comforts in the world to a dying man? He looks upon his Friends; but they cannot comfort him. Tell him of his honour, he knows that it ſhall not deſcend after him. Bring him his bags of Gold, and Silver; yet if he have not Chriſt, he remains diſconſolate.

What diligence ſhould you then give to get an intereſt in Chriſt, that, when neither Riches, nor Honours, nor Friends can afford you comfort; then Chriſt may be the comfort of your hearts, and your portion for ever!

8. Conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no hope; but art like, when thou comeſt to die, to die deſpairing. He that is not in Chriſt, can never hope for, nor expect Salvation by Chriſt. We muſt firſt be in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us, before we can conclude that he is to us *the hope of Glory*, *Col.* 1.27.

Where ever true Hope is, it is built upon Faith in Chriſt: Thoſe therefore that have not Chriſt dwelling in their hearts by Faith, *are without hope in the world*, Epheſ. 2.12.

And are you willing to ſit down ſatisfied in a hopeleſs condition? Oh, what horror will fill your Souls when you come to die, if Chriſt be not in you, *the hope of Glory*! Though you live

preſuming, yet you will die deſpairing: Though you are now lifted up in expectation as high as Heaven; yet, when you come to die, if through Chriſt you have not a well-grounded hope of eternal life, you will be caſt down into Hell!

If therefore, when death ſhall ſeize upon you, and judgment ſhall overtake you, you would not be found as men without hope: Oh then, take heed that you be not found out of Chriſt, but as living members of his myſtical body!

9. Conſider, Being out of Chriſt, thou haſt no protection, but lieſt open every moment to all danger imaginable. Though the Name of the Lord be a ſtrong Tower, yet none can find ſafety therein, but thoſe, that through Faith in Chriſt, are become righteous. Jeſus Chriſt is our only ſecurity againſt all dangers: Thoſe therefore that are out of Chriſt, how miſerable are they, as being liable to all manner of evils? There is no greater emblem of miſery, than to ſee a man in a ſharp ſtorm without any ſhelter: He that is out of Chriſt, let what ſtorms will be upon him, hath neither ſhelter for ſoul nor body. When Men aſſault him, when Devils tempt him, when the gates of Hell make war againſt him, and God frowns upon him; he hath nothing wherewith to defend himſelf, but lies open every moment to all the hoſtile incurſions of Men, and Devils, and the wrath of God which is like a conſuming fire!

Oh then, as you wiſh for ſhelter in a day of trouble, be ſure that you get an intereſt in Chriſt!

A Chriſtleſs ſoul is an harbourleſs ſoul; like a ſhip

ſhip in a ſtorm, he hath no where to put in for Harbour. How dare you then reſt any longer in a Chriſtleſs condition? What Shield will you have to defend your ſelves, in the day that Satan ſhall make war againſt you? Who will you have to reſcue you, in the day that the gates of Hell, that the World, and your own Luſts, ſhall aſſault you? What Skreen, in a word, will you have to keep off the fire of God's wrath, when kindled againſt you, that it do not conſume you? Poor ſelf-deſtroying ſinner! A deluge of wrath is coming upon thee, which, if thou hide not thy ſelf in the Ark, Jeſus Chriſt, will forcibly carry thee down into the red ſea of God's wrath and eternal diſpleaſure!

10. And laſtly, conſider, Not being in Chriſt, thou haſt no Salvation, but art like to go to Hell, and be damned for ever. The Salvation of loſt ſinners is laid up in Chriſt: *Neither is there any other Name given among men under Heaven, by which we muſt be ſaved*, Acts 4. 12. There was none but Jeſus Chriſt that could procure Salvation: He is the Way to Heaven; there is no man that comes to Glory without Him. God hath given us eternal life; but *this life is laid up in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Joh. 5. 11.

So then, he that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, hath life; but he that is out of Chriſt, hath no life, 1 *Joh.* 5. 12. And the Reaſon of this is manifeſt, Chriſt is the Saviour of the body; He ſaves none but ſuch as are living members of his myſtical body: So that all thoſe who die out of Chriſt, are cut off from all hopes of Salvation, *Epheſ.* 5. 23.

Now therefore lay this to heart, and, Do not wilfully deprive your ſelves of eternal Salvation; Do not wilfully expoſe your ſelf to an eternity of helliſh torments, by reſting ſhort of an intereſt in Chriſt. There is Salvation to be had in Chriſt; there is nothing but Wrath, and Hell, and eternal Miſery out of Chriſt: Be no longer therefore eſtranged from Chriſt, but now ſtrive that you may get an intereſt in him!

Oh, Do not any longer make leight of a matter of ſuch great and everlaſting conſequence! If your Souls be united to Chriſt, eternal life is yours; but if at laſt you be found out of Chriſt, everlaſting Death, and Miſery, muſt be your portion. Behold then, *I ſet before you this day, Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſes*, Heaven and Hell, eternal Joyes, and everlaſting Torments. Life, Bleſſing, and eternitie of heavenlie Joyes if you cloſe with Chriſt; but Death, Curſes, and eternity of helliſh Torments, in caſe you refuſe Him.

Oh, chuſe not death, but life; chuſe not curſes, but bleſſing; chuſe not hell, but heaven: Oh, chuſe not everlaſting torments, before the fulneſs of joy, and ſoul-ſatisfying happineſs that is to be had by an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt!

Fourthly, and laſtly, How much comfort may this ſpeak to all you that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who are indeed united to Chriſt, and made one with him? I purpoſe not to inſiſt upon all thoſe Grounds of Comfort that ariſe from our union with Chriſt, but that which I would dwell upon, is this, *That, being truly in Chriſt, and made one with him, you have the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion.*

And

And is not here abundance of comfort, and that which may fill you with joy unſpeakable and full of glory? To be at peace with God, and to have the breach betwixt him and our Souls made up in Chriſt, What a mercy, Oh, How great a priviledge and bleſſing is this! To have our enemies live at peace with us, is a mercy: but to have the enmity, betwixt God and our Souls, removed; to have God ſmiling upon us in the face of Chriſt, How great is ſuch a priviledge, and how bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe!

1. Conſider, Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion, you are no longer under his wrath; but whatever enmity, whatever hatred, whatever diſpleaſure there was before, in the heart of God againſt you, it is now perfectly removed, and done away.

So long as poor ſinners are unreconciled to God, his heart is ſet againſt them, and his wrath, his diſpleaſure it abides upon them; but being once reconciled to God, he no longer bears you the leaſt grudge: being once at peace with God in Chriſt, all the hatred, and wrath, and diſpleaſure of God againſt you, it is perfectly removed, and he now bears you no more ill-will, than if you had never ſinned againſt him, *Rom.* 8. 1.

Underſtand then (ye bleſſed of the Father) your happineſs, and rejoyce; being at peace with God, his wrath and diſpleaſure towards you, it's quite removed, it's now perfectly done away. Now, you need no more fear God's wrath

and heavie diſpleaſure, nor the dreadful ſentence of condemnation, *Depart*---- than if you had never offended him! And if you queſtion, whether this may be ground of rejoycing, ask our bleſſed Lord, crying out under the wrath of God for our ſakes, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me!* Ask *Cain*, ask *Judas*, ask *Achitophel*, who found God's wrath lying upon their Souls, more heavie than Mountains of Lead, and ſo dreadfully aſtoniſhing to them, that they were glad to take Sanctuary in the Grave, plunging themſelves in the boundleſs ocean of God's wrath, to avoid that ſmall drop which God had let fall in their conſciences. Nay, if yet you ſee not cauſe to rejoyce, that the wrath of God is no longer abiding upon you; Ask the damned in Hell, what thoughts they now have of God's wrath; Ask them, what they would not give, and do, and ſuffer, to be freed from it!

2. Conſider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion, you are now become the objects of his love, and ſpecial favour. Not only, Chriſtians, are you delivered from the wrath of God, but you are alſo received into favour with him, when once the peace of God in Chriſt is made your portion. Now, the love of God is toward you, and His heart as much ſet upon you, to do you good, as if you had never offended him. Of children of wrath, you are now children of grace; of hated, you are now beloved; and, inſtead of lying under God's frowns, he now ſmiles upon you; now you are to him as the ſeal on his arm, and as the ſignet on his right hand; you are now

his

his *Jedidiahs*, his *Beulahs*, his *Hephzibahs*; you are dearly accepted and made favourites in the beloved, *Epheſ.* 1. 6.

Oh then, how bleſſed is your condition, who being reconciled to God in Chriſt, have him ſmiling upon you, and are made partakers of his loving kindneſs, which is better than life it ſelf!

3. Conſider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion, you may go with boldneſs to the throne of Grace. Our firſt Parents having broken their peace with God, were glad to hide themſelves from him, as not daring to come in his preſence: but as for you, Chriſtians, that are reconciled unto God, you have the liberty of acceſs to the Throne of Grace; you may go to God in Prayer, as a Father, who both can, and is willing to help you in all your troubles, how many and grievous ſoever.

As it is with a Favourite at Court, he hath alwayes the King's ear, he is ſure of Audience whenſoever he comes; and alſo, to prevail in whatſoever ſuit he makes: So, Chriſtians, it is with you that are at peace with God, you have alwaies His ear open to you; whenſoever you make your addreſſes to the Throne of Grace, you are ſure of Audience; and whatever you ask of God, that is good for you, it ſhall be given you, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14.

Oh then, what a glorious priviledge is this, and how juſtly may it fill your hearts with joy, and gladneſs, who have peace with God; when there is no burden that lies upon your ſpirits,

but by prayer you may caſt it upon God, who hath promiſed to ſuſtain you; when what ever your condition be, though you lie under the ſoreſt afflictions, though you be ſtript of all your creature-comforts, though you be ſhut up as men appointed unto death, yet ſtill the way lies open to the Throne of Grace, and you may have acceſs with boldneſs to God in prayer, and open all your cares into his boſome!

As that good *Shunamite's* child being ſick, cried out unto his Father, *My Head, my Head!* ſo you that are at peace with God, when ever diſtreſſed through any affliction, you may run to him as a Father, to ſuccour you; Oh this dead heart, Father quicken it; Oh this hard heart, Father ſoften it; Oh this unclean heart, Father purifie it; Oh this bitter cup, *Father, if it be thy will, let it paſs from me!*

4. Conſider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion, this will alſo create in due time, a bleſſed calme in your troubled conſciences. Give a man Riches, give him Honours, give him Pleaſures, give him the greateſt confluence of all creature-enjoyments, and yet all will not ſerve to quiet his conſcience, when æſtuated, and terribly awakened through the wrath of an angry God: but now, when once a man is reconciled to God, when once the wrath of God is removed, and God ſmiles upon him in the face of Chriſt, this frees his heart and conſcience from all thoſe Armies of Perplexing fears, wherewith before he was daily aſſaulted, *Rom.* 5. 1.

Be thy heart, Chriſtian, never ſo full of doubts, and

and diſtreſſes; let it meditate what terrour it will, and be it never ſo full of perplexing fears; yet, if once thou be at peace with God, he can ſtill the raging of this Sea, give quiet to thy troubled conſcience, and lay the ſtorm that ſin hath raiſed in thy ſoul, how tempeſtuous and dreadful ſoever.

Oh then, what a cordial may this be for every diſtreſſed ſoul! Thou that goeſt mourning and bowed down from day to day, thou that walkeſt in darkneſs, and haſt no light, thou that knoweſt what it is to lie under the burden of a wounded ſpirit, what it is to be under the Throbs, Eſtuations, and bloody Agonies of an accuſing conſcience; Oh ſtrive to make it out to thy ſelf, that the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, is thy portion; and then fear not but this will give thee *Beauty for Aſhes*, this will give thee *the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praiſe, for the Spirit of Heavineſs*! *Iſa.* 61. 3.

5. Conſider; Being once reconciled to God, and at peace with him, you ſhall never any more come under his wrath. Indeed, As the Sun may be hid in a cloud, but yet is not out of the Firmament: ſo you may loſe the ſenſe of your peace with God, but yet that bleſſed league betwixt God and your ſouls, that peace and reconciliation with God, which in Chriſt is your portion, you can never loſe.

The light of Gods countenance through the interpoſition of your ſins may be darkned, and eclipſed: But yet he is ſtill a Father, he is ſtill at peace with you in Chriſt; and though poſſibly he ſeem to frown upon you, yet his Heart, his

Love

Love, his Favour, is as much now towards you, as ever.

If once God make a covenant of peace with you, if once he be reconciled unto you, and receive you into favour with himself; he will never again discovenant you; he will never any more look upon you as his enemies, nor be wrath with you, *Isa.* 54. 10. See there how God himself expresseth it, speaking to his Church about this very thing. *The Mountains*, saith he, *may depart, and the Hills be removed: but my loving kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*

Many storms and tempests may be abroad, but all the storms and tempests in the world, cannot remove the Mountains, nor cast them into the bottom of the Sea: So, though there should never so many storms from within, and tempests from without, beat upon you; though the corruption of your own hearts, though the World, together with all the powers of Hell and Darkness, should conspire in one, yet they shall never be able to make God your enemy, they shall never be able to make a breach upon your peace with God, they shall never be able to cast you down into the dead-sea of Gods wrath, and heavy displeasure.

If, Christian, God hath so far had mercy on thee, as to be reconciled to thee, as to be at peace with thee, and to receive thee into favour with himself: then know, that thy condition is more sure and stable, than the Mountains themselves; There is now nothing in all the World

World that ſhall break that bleſſed Peace and atonement that is made betwixt God and thy ſoul!

Oh then, what comfort, what joy is this, to have all guilt, and wrath, and condemnation removed; that Divine Juſtice will never ſue the ſinner, nor queſtion him any more for any of thoſe thouſands of ſins that he ſometimes committed!

Being once reconciled to God, and at peace with him; have you not cauſe to rejoyce in the Lord, when, what ever your provocations have been, yet God will never queſtion you for them any more, God will never be wrath with you, nor take from you his loving kindneſs any more, but will love you with an everlaſting love, and will prove an everlaſting friend! *Pſal.* 74. 26.

6. Conſider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him for your portion, you have that, which, if rightly improved, may ſweeten every condition to you. A man that is at peace with God, he finds matter of comfort in all conditions, in his falling as well as in his riſing, in his ebbing as well as in his flowing, in impriſonment as well as in liberty, and in death as well as in life, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. *Paul* was a man reconciled to God, and how ſweetly doth he ſit down ſatisfied in every condition?

The beſt of conditions is not good, without the peace of God, and reconciliation with him; and, having this for our portion, the worſt is not bad. The only true comfort of life, and that which ſweetens every condition, is, the peace of God, and the Light of his countenance; Tis this

this that fills Heaven with all its Glory; And 'tis this also that fills every condition, with all its sweetness.

Let, Christians, your bread be the bread of affliction, and let tears be your drink: Yet, as a learned Man sweetly saith, that having the light of Gods countenance shining upon you, this may transubstantiate your bread into Angels food, and turn those brinish tears, into the wine of consolation. Let your house be a Prison, a Dungeon, an Hell; yet, having the light of Gods countenance shining upon you, this may turn it into a Palace, a Court, a Heaven. Let, in a word, Goods, and Friends, and Life, and All forsake you; yet, having the light of Gods countenance shining upon you, this may justly be Goods, and Friends, and Life, and All to you.

Oh then, having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for your portion, be your condition what it will, yet this may sweeten it to you, this may wipe away all tears from your eyes!

What need they to be afraid, when they hear of wars, and rumours of war, when they meet with trouble from within, and with persecution from without, who have the peace of God for their portion, who have the light of Gods countenance shining upon them!

7. Consider, Having the peace of God and reconciliation with him, for your portion; you have that which brings with it all safety, and protection. If God be your friend, no matter who stands your enemie; If God will be for you, who can be against you? *Rom.* 8. 31.

You

You may possibly be at a losse, where to hide your selves in a day of trouble; but being reconciled to God in Christ, you may take Sanctuarie in the Name of the Lord, and none shall be able to hurt you, nor to bring you thence, *Prov.* 18.10. If God be an enemy, all the world cannot save you: so, if God be your friend, neither men, nor devils, no nor all the powers of Hell and Darkness, can ever work your destruction!

8. Consider; Having the peace of God, and being reconciled to him in Christ, you have the most real Good in all the World for your portion. The covetous man makes Riches his portion, the voluptuous man Pleasures, and the ambitions man Honours: but you that are reconciled to God in Christ, you have the favour of God, and, that which is better than life it self, his Loving Kindness for your portion.

And is there anie good in the World to compare with this? Oh how little are riches, how little are honours, how little are the smiles of men to be set by, in comparison of peace with God, in comparison with his favour, his smiles, his loving kindness which is better than life!

All other things are vain and empty; but, the peace of God, *that is Bread indeed, that is a Well of living Water, springing up to Eternal Life.*

9. Consider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for your portion, you have that which may fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory, *Phil.* 4.7. The Apostle in that place calls it *Peace, passing all understanding.* This is that *white-Stone*, that *hidden-Manna*, that *new-Name*, which no man knows

knows but he that hath it, *Prov.* 14. 12.

Oh you that are yet Strangers to Chriſt, little do you know how much joy, how much gladneſs, what unconceivable comfort there is to be had by all that are reconciled to God, and at peace with him! What if the World frown, yet if God ſmile, what if the World breathe forth nothing but Impriſonment, Exile, and Death againſt you; yet if God will ſpeak peace to your ſouls, this may make you rejoyce with joy, unſpeakable and full of glory?

Being once at peace with God, this can turn night into day, ſorrow into joy, death into life; Yea, this can turn the terrours of Hell into the pleaſures of Heaven.

10. And laſtly, conſider; Having the peace of God, and reconciliation with him, for your portion, this ere long ſhall be changed into endleſs, ſoul-ſatisfying, and compleat felicity. When you die, you do but go from peace to peace; from peace *Inchoate*, to peace *Conſummate*, from peace begun in Gods favour here, to that peace which ſhall never end but in the endleſs enjoyment of God in glory, *Iſa.* 57. 2.

Oh then, how bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe! If the peace of God, in the firſtfruits of it be a continual feaſt, and that which paſſeth all underſtanding; Oh then, what tongue can tell, what heart can conceive, how Glorious, Exſtatical, and Soul-raviſhing, it muſt needs be when we come to Heaven! Here, chriſtians, the light of Gods countenance is many times overclouded, and he ſeems to frown upon you, but being once landed upon the ſhore of eternal peace

peace; now, the Lord will never frown more upon you, now he will never any more withdraw the light of his countenance, but you ſhall have it ſhining upon you, in the face of Chriſt, to all Eternity!

FINIS.

SERMON II.

1 Pet. 4. 16.

Yet if any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorifie God in this behalf.

PErſecution in the world, is an inſeparable Appendant to the Goſpel of Chriſt; and the certain Lot of all that will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus. Though Chriſt died to take away the curſe from us, yet he died not to take away the croſs from us; but hath told us, that *in the world we ſhall have Tribulation*; requiring, that, *whoever will be his Diſciple, ſhould deny himſelf, and take up his croſs.*

Before *Iſrael* get to *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, they muſt go through a wilderneſs of fiery Serpents, and a red Sea: So the children of God, in their paſſage to the holy Land,

Land, the Heavenlie *Jeruſalem*, muſt meet with fiery Serpents, and a red Sea of Perſecution, not thinking to wear the crown, without bearing the croſs; nor to reign with Chriſt in Heaven, without ſuffering for Chriſt on Earth.

But, becauſe there are many, who, when they meet with any trouble in the world, are prone to look upon it as an evidence of their own happineſs, concluding their cauſe to be good, and that Chriſt himſelf is imbarqued in the ſhip thereof, becauſe obnoxious to ſo many ſtorms: I ſhall therefore endeavour to undeceive all ſuch; and to let you underſtand when it is, that we may look upon our Sufferings, not as an argument of our Miſerie, but of our Happineſs; not as matter of Shame, but of Glorie to us; and that is, as our Apoſtle tells us in the words of my Text, when *we ſuffer as Chriſtians.*

Yet if any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God in this behalf.

Our bleſſed Apoſtle, having been urging upon Chriſtians, the duty of a ſuffering condition, endeavours to let them know, how they may ſteer a right courſe through the deep waters of Tribulation, towards the harbour of eternal reſt. This he doth by ſhewing them, How they muſt not ſuffer, How they muſt.

For that, he tells them, That they muſt not ſuffer as Murderers, nor as Theeves, nor as Buſie-bodies in other men's matters. And for this, he tells them in the words of my Text,

That

That if at any time they ſhould be called out to ſuffering, they muſt give diligence to ſuffer as Chriſtians; moreover aſſuring them, That ſo to ſuffer, is not matter of ſhame, but of glorifying God.

In the words therefore of my Text, you may obſerve theſe Two Particulars:

1. A Suppoſition; *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian.*
2. A gracious Impoſition; *Let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God in this behalf.*

First, *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian.*] There is the Apoſtle's Suppoſition, That if we ſuffer upon the account of our Chriſtianity, and that in ſuch holy manner as becomes Chriſtians, we have then no cauſe of diſcouragement in this behalf, be our Afflictions what they will.

Secondly, *Let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God in this behalf.*] There is the Apoſtle's Impoſition, implying, That it is no diſ-honeſt thing to ſuffer as Chriſtians, that we ought to be aſhamed of; but a glorious priviledge, for which we have cauſe to praiſe God, and ſpeak good of his Name.

Doct. *That for any man to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, is matter, not of ſhame, but of glory to him; and that for which he hath reaſon to bleſs the Lord.* Whatſoever ſhame a man is expoſed to, as a Chriſtian, is indeed his glory; and whatſoever he ſuffers upon that account, he hath cauſe to bleſs the Lord, ſpeaking good of his Name for it.

In the profecution of this *Doctrine*, having ſhewed both *Negatively* and *Affirmatively*, what it is to ſuffer as a Chriſtian; I ſhall give you the *Reaſons*, evincing, *That ſo to ſuffer, is matter not of ſhame, but of glory to a man, and that for which he hath cauſe to bleſs the Lord*; And ſo paſs from the *Doctrine*, to the *Practical improvement* thereof, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, therefore, I am to ſhew you, what it is to *ſuffer as a Chriſtian*; and that both *Negatively*, and *Affirmatively*.

Firſt, Ἀποφατικῶς, καὶ' ἄρνησιν; by way of *Negation*.

1. *When men ſuffer for their own miſcarriages, and upon the account of ſuch errours as they have eſpouſed to themſelves, this is not to ſuffer as Chriſtians.* For this reaſon it is, that our Apoſtle gives us a caution, admoniſhing us, that none of us ſuffer *as an evil-doer*, 1 Pet. 4. 15. For men to ſuffer by the hand of Juſtice, for their Drunkenneſs, Whoredoms, Rebellion, Idolatry, Blaſphemies, Faction, and damnable Hereſies; this is not matter of glory, but of ſhame; not of comfort, but of juſt confuſion. Such men do not ſuffer Perſecution, but Execution; not as Martyrs, but as Malefactors; by committing the evil of ſin, they expoſe themſelves to the evil of puniſhment: And what more inſupportable, what more dreadful in all the world, than to ſuffer, not for good, but for evil; not for well-doing, but for ill-doing; not for ſhunning, but for running into all exceſs of riot?

2. *When*

2. *When men ſuffer contumaciouſly, and meerly from a ſpirit of ſtubbornneſs, pervicacy, and contradiction.* *Ariſtotle* himſelf, could make a difference between Fortitude, when a man would die for Virtue's ſake; and Audacity, when a man out of a raſh boldneſs will contemne Death, perſiſting ſtubbornly in his own way, and, from a ſpirit of contradiction, aſſerting his own opinion againſt the greateſt oppoſition, and at the deareſt rates. Thus, as there is a ſpiritual Fortitude, wrought in us by the Spirit of God; ſo, there is a natural hardneſs and gallantry of ſpirit in ſome men, whereby they are able to trample, even Death it ſelf, that πάντων φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον, under their feet.

So that if any of us loſe Houſes, or Lands, or Liberty, yea, or Life it ſelf, not from the Spirit of God ſtrengthning us, and working a ſpiritual fortitude in us; but only contumaciouſly, from a ſpirit of contradiction and ſtubbornneſs, this is not to ſuffer as a Chriſtian. Oh then, how narrow is the Way, and how ſtrait is the Gate that leads to Heaven, when even our ſufferings, in a good cauſe, may ſo much be corrupted with ſinful ingredients!

3. *When men ſuffer meerly to get a Name, to be taken notice of, and to be cried up as the non-ſuch in the world.* 'Tis poſſible for an ambitious man, to ſell his Liberty for a little popular Applauſe, and to ſacrifice his Life, to purchaſe Fame.

Vicit amor Patriæ, laudiſque immenſa cupido.

But, as Chriſt ſaid in another caſe, How can

thoſe men ſuffer as Chriſtians, *who receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that cometh from God alone?* Joh. 5. 44.

4. And laſtly, *When men ſuffer out of a deſign that they have, to promote ſome carnal intereſt; not out of love to the truth, but as it is the way wherein they ſtand engaged.* There is nothing more frequent (my Brethren) than for men to ſuffer for the Cauſe of Chriſt, not as it's His, but as their own worldly intereſt is imbarqued therein, and ſo they become Martyrs for themſelves, and not for Chriſt. Thus a man may poſſibly die for *Proteſtantiſm*, againſt *Popery*; not ſo much becauſe it's the truth of God, but, becauſe it's the way he was educated in, and in which his outward intereſt wholly ſtands. So that if an Argument from our own Propriety, and not from Chriſt's; from our own Intereſt, and not from His, be that which prevails with us to run the hazard of Reproach, and Perſecution in the world; This is not to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, but as a Pagan; not as the Martyrs of Chriſt, but as Martyrs to our own luſts.

Secondly, Καταφατικῶς, κατ' ἔφεσιν; by way of *Affirmation.*

1. *When men ſuffer in a good cauſe; not for aſſerting Errour, but for aſſerting the Truth; not for evil-doing, but for well-doing. Non pœna, ſed cauſa facit Martyrem*, is a ſure Maxim. 'Tis not the blood, and ſuffering, that makes a Martyr; but the cauſe for which he ſuffers. We are all apt to intitle our quarrel to Chriſt, pretending the cauſe is God's,

God's, when indeed it's our own: But, to be ſure, the glory of our ſufferings is marr'd, when there is ſomewhat of an evil-deed in them; neither may we take comfort in ſuffering for any cauſe, but what is purely Chriſtian, 1 *Pet.*4.15.

For, *Non ex paſſione, certa juſtitia; ſed ex juſtitia, glorioſa paſſio*, ſaith *Auſtin.* It's not ſuffering, that makes a cauſe righteous; but it's righteouſneſs, that makes ſufferings glorious. So then, we muſt not meaſure the cauſe by the ſufferings, but the ſufferings by the cauſe. When for the hope of *Iſrael*, we are bound in chains; when for the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience, we endure hardſhip, eſpouſing to our ſelves the quarrel of Religion, this is to ſuffer for Righteouſneſs-ſake; this is indeed to ſuffer as a Chriſtian.

2. *When men ſuffer with a good Conſcience, propoſing right ends to themſelves in all that they ſuffer.* A man may have a good cauſe, and a bad conſcience; he may ſuffer in the way of Righteouſneſs, and yet he himſelf be unrighteous. The very Form (my Brethren) of Religion, doth ſometimes draw the croſs along with it, expoſing a man to perſecution as well as the Power; but he that ſuffers for no more than the Form of Godlineſs, being animated thereto by nothing but ſome ſiniſter ends, and carnal conſiderations, to be ſure doth not ſuffer as a Chriſtian; nor can he take comfort in ought that he ſuffers. For, Oh, How ſad muſt it needs be, for a man when he comes to ſuffer, to have nothing to bear him out, but an empty Form; nothing but the low Principles of vain glory, and popular ap-

pauſe in the world. For a man to be in danger of loſing his temporal eſtate, and to have no aſſurance of an everlaſting inheritance; of being deprived of life temporal, and to have no aſſurance of life eternal, this muſt needs make a man diſconſolate under every burden. No wonder if the croſs make that man ſink down in deſpair, who, through the hypocriſie of his own heart, and the corruptneſs of his ends in ſuffering, can never hope to be crowned!

Integrity of heart, will make a man ſuffer with comfort, and go as chearfully to the ſtake, as if he were going to be crowned, for then he ſuffers as a Chriſtian: But he that ſuffers in God's own cauſe with a bad conſcience, and for baſe ends, can have no comfort, but muſt ſuffer a double Hell; a Hell of Perſecution, and an Hell of Damnation.

3. *When men ſuffer adviſedly; not running themſelves upon unneceſſary dangers, but only taking up the Croſs when called out thereunto.* Chriſtians are not to deſire troubles, it's enough to bear them, when God layes them upon us. Chriſt hath taught us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation:* 'Tis therefore but a fond preſumption, to caſt our ſelves upon it.

'Tis ſtoried of certain *Donatiſts*, called, *Circumcelliones*, that out of an affectation of Martyrdom, they would run themſelves upon dangers, and compel men to kill them: But we are not thus to create our ſelves a croſs; if we bear it as Chriſtians when God layes it upon us, and calls us out thereunto, that is all he requires. So then, it is not only lawful, but indeed a duty for every man

man to conſult his own ſafety, ſo far as he may with a good conſcience: but when we are reduced to ſuch ſtraits, that we muſt either neglect our duty, or run the hazard of perſecution in the world; either the Truth muſt ſuffer, or we muſt ſuffer; either we, in a word, muſt deny Chriſt, or die for Chriſt; Here now, is a clear call to ſuffer, and we ſuffer as Chriſtians, and may therefore rejoyce; whereas we loſe the comfort of our ſufferings, when we run our ſelves unadviſedly upon them.

4. *When men ſuffer quietly without murmuring.* Thoſe amongſt us that would ſuffer as Chriſtians, when ever Gods hand is upon their back, muſt preſently have their own hand upon their mouth, reſolving to be with *David* as dumb under every affliction, becauſe God ſends it, *Pſal.* 29. 10.

Such is Gods Wiſdom, that he knows, and ſuch is his goodneſs that he always gives, what is beſt for us: We may not therefore repine at any affliction, but muſt ſay with old *Eli* in our greateſt ſufferings, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeems him good,* 1 *Sam.* 3. 18.

And indeed, a greater ſigne of Grace there cannot be, than in the midſt of all afflictions, humbly to ſubmit our ſelves to the will of God: for though there be no ſtriving with our Maker, yet how doth froward Nature ſtill prompt us to a quarrel, in our murmuring againſt him? But tell me thou that complaineſt againſt God, murmuring at his Providence for thoſe afflictions that lie upon thee; canſt thou once think to be Chriſts diſciple, and not follow him? or deſt thou think to follow him, and not take up this Croſs?

Was the Captain of our Salvation made perfect through ſufferings, and doſt thou think to be partaker of Salvation by him, and not have fellowſhip in his ſufferings with him? Did he wear a crown of Thorns for thee, and doſt thou grudge to carry the croſs for him? Why will you not conſider, for the quieting of your own ſpirits, that there is no aſpiring, with the ſons of *Zebedee*, to Chriſts Throne, unleſs we quietly drink of Chriſts cup? *Mark* 10. 37.

5. *When men are induced to ſuffer by the love that they bear to Chriſt and his Cauſe.* A man may ſuffer for Chriſt, I mean in his Cauſe, without any love to him, but it's nothing worth, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3.

Through natural ſtoutneſs, men may be conſtant in their way; but, thoſe only who burn with love to Chriſt, and zeal for his Glory, do ſuffer as Chriſtians.

Thus the Primitive Chriſtians, they burned more in love to Chriſt, than in the fire for him; reſolving to make his Crown flouriſh, though in their own aſhes; they firſt burned in love to Chriſt, and that made them ſo willing to burn in the Fire for him.

We ſee how far a humane love, either of their Country, or of vain Glory, hath tranſported ſome to the caſting away of their own lives: how much more ſhould a ſpiritual love of Chriſt put courage into us, to undergo the greateſt hazards for Chriſt, who ſo willingly died to redeem our ſouls? Nothing was able to turn away his love from us; nothing therefore ſhould be able to quench our love to Chriſt, would we

ſuffer

ſuffer as Chriſtians, *Cant.* 8. 7.

6. *When men ſuffer couragiouſly, not fearing the face of an Adverſary.* God proclaimed that ſuch as were fearful, ſhould not go to wars: So thoſe amongſt us who fear danger more then ſin, are not fit for Chriſt's war, nor can they ever ſuffer as Chriſtians. For, a Chriſtian, though he ought to be meek, yet he muſt alwayes be reſolute in a good cauſe, and carried on with a ſpirit of gallantry, againſt all oppoſition.

Thus it was with thoſe three Jewiſh Worthies; they were of ſuch a brave heroick ſpirit, that neither *Nebuchadnezzer's* ſmiles, nor his frowns, neither his muſick, nor his furnace, could alter their reſolution, *Dan.* 3. 18.

There are none that appear leſs noble and couragious than Chriſtians, when not oppoſed in the matter of their God: nor any that prove more Heroick, and Magnanimous, when ſo oppoſed. Such have boldneſs to withſtand the corruptions of the times, to walk contrary to the courſe of the World, to out-face the ſcorns of men, and to be valiant for a deſpiſed power of godlineſs, not fearing to own a perſecuted profeſſion.

The Primitive Chriſtians, though their fleſh were boyled, roſted, diſmembred, yet like the Adamant, they remained invincible; Such was their courage in ſuffering, that their perſecutors ſtood amazed, and were more weary in tormenting, than they were in enduring the torment.

What an invincible courage was that of *Luther*, ſtanding againſt the Miſtriſs of Fornications,

ons, the Princeſs of the Earth, and, if it had been poſſible as he profeſſed of himſelf, againſt a whole city of devils?

The like gallantry of ſpirit we may alſo obſerve in *Chryſoſtom*, trampling upon the pride, and perſecution of the Empreſs *Eudoxa*. No leſs was the fortitude of *Athanaſius*, ſtanding alone againſt the power of *Conſtantius*, the credit of a prevailing Faction, the frequent Synodical conventions of countenanced Hereticks,& the general deluge of *Arianiſm* in the world. In a word, the time would fail me, if I ſhould ſpeak of the unbended conſtancy of all the holy Martyrs, who poſed the inventions, tired the cruelties, withſtood the flatteries, quenched the fire, ſtopped the mouths, and overcame all the tyrannies of their proudeſt perſecutors, whoſe courage and magnanimity we muſt labour to imitate in all our ſufferings, would we ſuffer as Chriſtians.

7. *When men ſuffer chearfully, not giving way to deſpondency of ſpirit under any burden, nor mourning as men without hope.* Chriſt ſuffered for us chearfully, his death was a free-will offering, and ſuch muſt our ſufferings be for him, *Luk.* 12. 50.

Thus *Moſes* ſuffered chearfully, *chooſing rather to ſuffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, Heb.* 11.24,25. Suffering was not ſo much his task, as his choice; the croſs was not ſo much impoſed, as imbraced by him.

Tertullian, in his Apology, tells us, that the Primitive Chriſtians, took more comfort in their ſufferings, than in their deliverance; *Magis damnati quàm abſoluti gaudentes*, rejoycing more in

in the unjuſt condemnation, than in the abſolution of themſelves.

Would we then ſuffer as chriſtians, we muſt not go ſorrowing, but rejoycing, not deſponding, but triumphing, to the croſs of Chriſt; not only bearing it with patience, but alſo taking it up with chearfulneſs. Thus ſaith *Paul* to the *Hebrews*, *Ye took the ſpoyling of your goods joyfully*; Implying, that amidſt the riflings and incivilities of rude men, they were ſtill chearful, *Heb.* 10. 34.

The ſame Apoſtle ſpeaking of himſelf, goes a ſtep higher, *I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation*, ſaith he; ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ, I ſuperabound, I have an exuberancy of joy, and overflow therewith!

8. And laſtly, *When men ſuffer perſeveringly, reſolving to hold out to the end.* All the while Chriſt's cauſe and carnal accommodations are conjoyned, every hypocritical and unſound heart, can make as great a ſhew, as that which is never ſo faithful: but when ſtorms ariſe, and perſecutions begin to be violent, the hypocrite is preſently offended, and falls away, *Mat.* 13.

You therefore that would ſuffer as chriſtians, muſt not only begin, but hold on, to endure hardſhip for Jeſus Chriſt. Be the ſtorm what it will, you muſt reſolve to go through it; and not only to ſip of the Cup of affliction, but to drink it off to the very dregs, if neceſſity ſo require.

Though it be more to ſuffer for God, than to do for God; yet the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth it poſſible for a man to ſuffer much for Chriſt, and yet after to fall away to his own everlaſting damage,

Gal.

Gal. 3. 4. Have ye ſuffered, ſaith he to the *Galatians*, τοσαῦτα an aggravating word, ſo many things for number, ſo grievous for nature, and all this in vain; Whereby, doth he not clearly imply, that if they revolted from Chriſt, and the ſimplicity of his Goſpel, to *Moſaical* ceremonies, all their former ſufferings for the truth, would afford them no comfort, nor at all advantage them?

In Chriſtianis, non initia, ſed fines laudantur. That which gives the Garland to all vertuous actions is conſtancy; thoſe that then by ſuffering as Chriſtians, would wear the crown, muſt go on even to the ſhedding of their blood, if it be for the reſiſting of ſin, *Heb.* 12. 4.

Not he that begins to ſuffer, but he that endures to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved, *Mat.* 13. 13.

Secondly, Having thus ſhewed you what it is to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, I now come to give you the *Reaſons*, why, Thus to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, is not matter of ſhame, but of Glory to a man, and that for which he hath cauſe to bleſſe the Lord.

1. *Becauſe, to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, will argue the truth of our grace.* Perſecution is the touch-ſtone of ſincerity, diſcovering true Saints from painted Hypocrites. An Hypocrite may follow Chriſt to Mount *Olivet*, but not to Mount *Calvary*; He may cleave to Chriſt, when attended with *Hoſanna*, but not when he is followed with *Crucifige*; I, but a true Chriſtian doth as readily imbrace a crucified, as a crowned Chriſt; Chriſt bleeding upon the croſs, as Chriſt ſitting upon the Throne of his Glory.

Where

Where there is truth of Grace, it uſually makes a man a Voluntier in the wars of Chriſt, enabling him rather to ſuffer for Chriſt, than to ſin againſt him, and as willingly to die for Chriſt upon a lawful call, as to live unto him: However, thoſe, who, when put upon tryal, can experience this in themſelves, need not queſtion the truth of their grace, but if they ſuffer as Chriſtians, they may well conclude themſelves to be Chriſtians; and have they not then reaſon to glorifie God in this behalf?

2. *Becauſe, to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, doth not only argue the truth, but alſo an eminent degree, and meaſure of grace.*

'Tis not uſual with Chriſt to put new Wine into old bottles; to tye a Giant's burden upon a child's back; nor to exact rigid, and heavy ſervices of ſuch as are weak in grace, *Mat.* 9. 17. *Optimi milites ad duriſſima mittuntur.* The ſtouteſt Souldiers are put upon the hotteſt ſervice: ſo the holieſt Saints, upon the ſharpeſt ſufferings.

Chriſt calls out none but his Champions to fight his battels; So that, to ſuffer as Chriſtians, it argues you to be grown Chriſtians; The difficulty of that ſervice, clearly manifeſting the ſtrength of your grace; Whether therefore, to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, be matter of ſhame or of glory, of murmuring againſt God or of glorifying his Name in this behalf, judge ye. For, what can more grace a Chriſtian, than proficiency in grace? or what greater reaſon can he have to glorifie God, than for letting him know, that his grace is ready to commence, and take the degree of Eternal glory?

3. *Be-*

3. *Becauſe of the benefit thereby accrewing to the Church of God.* Reſolute defences, gain much upon the world; the Church being like an Oak, which liveth by his own wounds, and the more limbs are cut off, the more new ſprouts. *Tertullian* ſaith, The Heathens cruelty was the great motive whereby men were drawn into the Chriſtian Religion.

Auſtin alſo, reckons up all the methods of deſtruction, by which the Heathens ſought to ſuppreſs the growth of Chriſtianity, but ſtill obſerves that it grew the more; *Ligabantur, Includebantur, Cædebantur, Torquebantur, Urebantur, Laniabantur, Trucidabantur, & tamen Multiplicabantur*; They were bound, butchered, racked, ſtoned, burned; but ſtill they were multiplyed, *Auguſt. l. 22. de civit. Dei, cap. 6.*

Chriſtians, like our Saviour's loaves, do multiply in the breaking; and the more men ſeek by perſecutions to ſuppreſs them, the more they propagate their cauſe, and increaſe their number.

The Church was firſt founded in blood, and it thriveth beſt, when it is watered with blood; founded in the blood of Chriſt, and watered as it were with the blood of the Martyrs.

Pauls being bound, made the Truth more enlarged; the ſhowres of Chriſtian blood have ever made the Church fruitful; and the Goſpel hath always flouriſhed in the aſhes of the Martyrs, *Phil.* 1. 13.

So then, ſuch as ſuffer, have no cauſe of ſhame but of glory, and may well be thankful to God, ſpeaking good of his Name, that through their afflictions,

afflictions, Religion is propagated; and that their own death and ſufferings, do any way contribute to the life and flouriſhing of the Church.

4. *Becauſe in ſuffering as Chriſtians, we are thereby made conformable to Chriſt our Head* The Diſciple is not above his Maſter; if they called him *Beelzebub*, what ſhall we be called? If they did ſo to the *green tree*, they will never ſpare the *drie*; If they perſecuted Him, how can we think but they will perſecute us alſo?

Such is the Analogie between the Head and Members, Chriſt and his Church, that, as our Redemption was not perfected, ſo neither ſhall our Salvation be conſummated, without ſuffering of Afflictions; it being impoſſible that we ſhould wholly be exempted from ſuffering, when the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect thereby. For, whom-ever God fore-knew in the Election of his Grace, He did Predeſtinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son; conformed to him here in Sufferings and Holineſs, and conformed to him hereafter in Glory and Happineſs: And, is there not then a cauſe why we ſhould *glorifie God in this behalf*, Rom. 8. 29?

5. *Becauſe, what ever men ſuffer as Chriſtians, they are ſure of deliverance out of it.* Though Trouble may be a Chriſtian's condition, yet Reſt is his portion; though Afflictions may be his exerciſe, yet Deliverance ſhall be his inheritance, *Jer.* 29. 11.

The Rod may be upon the back of the Righteous, but the Lord intends it ſhall not reſt there.

The People of God, oppreſs'd with miſery, ſeem to be laid dead in their graves; however, they

they are but as ſeed caſt in the furrows; Light is then ſown for the upright, and they muſt wait till harveſt, the ſet time of their deliverance, *Pſal.* 97. 11.

God, many times, ſeems to ſtand a-loof off, whilſt his People are ſuffering; but, *In the Mount will the Lord be ſeen*, delivering them in the nick of their extremity, out of all their miſery, *Gen.* 22. 14.

As the thickeſt darkneſs of the night is neareſt to the morning-light; and the loweſt ebb, to the tides return; So, the greateſt miſery which in a Natural man prompts to deſpair, in the Spiritual man becomes a ground of hope, who is then neareſt to deliverance out of all his troubles when his caſe is moſt deſperate; which cannot be matter of ſhame, but of glory to him, and that, for which he hath cauſe to bleſs the Lord.

6. *Becauſe, whatever we ſuffer as Chriſtians, it is ſuffered for Chriſt.* To be called out to ſuch ſpecial Service, and ſingled forth to bear witneſs to the Truths of Chriſt, is an act of ſpecial favour, and ſo no matter of ſhame, but of glory; no cauſe of accuſing God by murmuring thoughts, but of praiſing Him with thankful hearts, *Phil.* 1. 29.

Perſecution (ſaith one) as it is a badge of our Order, ſo likewiſe it's an enſign of our Glory. What greater honour can be put upon a mortal man, than to ſtand up in the cauſe of God, and not only to die in the Lord, but alſo to die for the Lord?

This Conſideration, you ſhall find, had a great influence

influence upon the Primitive Christians, of whom 'tis said, That, *they went away rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ*, *Acts* 5. 41. The words in the Original, are much more Emphatical, They rejoyced, ὅτι κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι, that they were so far honoured, as to be dishonoured; and so far graced, as to suffer disgrace for Christ.

Who thinks it not his glory, that he can shew the wounds and scars which he received for his Prince's sake, in defence of his Soveraign! Thus the Saints have worn their sufferings, as Ornaments; *Ignatius* rejoyceth in bonds, calling his Fetters πνευματικὰς μαργαρίτας, his *Spiritual Pearls*; And *Paul* accounts of the Marks of Christ in his own body, as so many prints of his Glory, *Gal.* 6. 17.

Never yet were any Princes so famous for their Victories, as the Martyrs for what they suffered in the cause of Christ.

7. *Because Christ alwayes gives-in sutable supplies of Grace, and mercy, to those that suffer as Christians.* God hath consolations proper for Martyrs, and cordials that are sutable for his children in all their tryals, giving them a kind of blessed dedoleing under every cross, by some sutable comfort.

If men frown upon us, he hath Smiles; If men reproach us, he hath Honours for us; If men cast us out of the Synagogue, he will take us in, being gone before to prepare Mansions of glory for us, in his Father's house; If men, in a word, kill us, depriving us of life temporal, Christ will raise us again from the dead, and crown

us with life Eternal, *John* 14. 2. 19. These and the like comfortable considerations, made one Martyr, when the chain was fastening to him, say, *Blessed be God for this wedding Girdle*: Another, kissing the Stake, *I shall not lose my life, but change it for a better; instead of Coals, I shall have Pearls.* A third, *Welcome the crose of Christ: my Saviour began to me in a bitter cup, and shall not I pledge him?* And another, *You* Papists *that look for miracles, I feel no more pain in the Fire, than if it were in a bed of Downe!*

8. *Because, whatever we suffer as Christians, we are bettered by it.* Gods people are not only approved, but also improved, by their sufferings.

Thus holy *David*: It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word, *Psal.* 119. 71.

Schola crucis, Schola lucis; we say. Afflictions give instruction, either for the mortifying of some sin, or for the quickning of some grace. Thus we find it with good *Jacob*; when he was afflicted with the cruelty of his sons, and with the fear of the *Canaanits*, he then remembers his Vow, and fulfils it; he then orders his household, and reforms it; then all the strange gods are cast out of doors, and away he goes, in zeal to God's worship, to build him an Altar at *Bethel*, *Gen.* 35. 1.

Though therefore, no affliction for the present be joyous, but grievous; yet, to be sure it's no matter of shame, but of glory to us, for that afterward, it brings forth the peaceable fruit

fruit of Righteouſneſs, *Heb.* 12. 11.

What ever we ſuffer as Chriſtians, is not intended of God any other wayes, than as *Jonathan's* Arrows, not to wound, but to warn us; not to deſtroy, but to inſtruct us; not to kill, but to admoniſh us; not, in a word, to plague, but to heal us: The Lord therefore *chaſtening his children, as an indulgent Father, for their profit, that they may be partakers of his Holineſs*, Heb. 12. 10.

Affliction, is a corroſive, to eat out our proud fleſh; its a Fan to winow us; and a fire to refine us, conſuming away the droſs of indwelling corruption.

Affliction, to be ſhort, is God's Phyſick, which he applies to his own children, for the carrying away of their ill and peccant humours: Now, to be ſure, that which thus purgeth out ſin the cauſe of ſhame, can never be matter of ſhame, but of glory to us.

9. *Becauſe, whatever we ſuffer as Chriſtians, it redounds to the honour of Chriſt.* It proclaims him to be a good Maſter, when his ſervants will come to him through a ſtorm of perſecution, rejoycing to wear his Livery, though lined with diſgrace, and ſtained in their own blood.

Now, can that which is thus matter of glory to Chriſt, be matter of ſhame to a Chriſtian? Doth not the Head, when glorified, reflect a glory upon all the Members?

Hath not the Lord promiſed to honour thoſe, that honour him? If then it be no matter of ſhame, but of Glory to live to Chriſt, to be ſure it cannot be matter of ſhame, but of glory to die for Chriſt?

10. And lastly; *Because, whatever we suffer as Christians, doth prepare us for glory, and at length we shall be crowned therewith.* The cross is a golden Ladder, by which we clime up to Heaven; a Christian may lose his life, but not his reward; he may have his head taken off, but his crown can no man take from him. For, *He that now sows in tears, shall hereafter reap in joy; he that suffers for Christ, shall be glorified together with him*, Rom. 8.

This, surely, was that which made our blessed Lord call upon us to *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, when men revile and persecute us, saying all manner of evil against us falsly for his sake*; because, saith he, *great is your reward in Heaven*, Matth. 5. 11, 12.

In Heaven there is Life, and that Eternal; a crown, and that of Glory; an Inheritance, and that a Kingdom. Tell me then, oh man, what is more desirable than Life? what Life more excellent, than that of Glory? what Glory more glorious, than that of a Kingdom? what Kingdom more firm, than that by Inheritance; which having God for its builder, can never be moved? And yet this is the reward of those who suffer in the way of righteousness, for the sake of Christ!

If then life, and Eternal life; Glory, and a crown of Glory; a Kingdom, and that by Inheritance, which can never be moved, shall at length be given as a reward to all those who suffer as Christians, we may certainly then conclude that to suffer as a Christian, is no matter of shame, but of glory to a man, and that for which

which he hath cauſe to bleſſe the Lord.

Thirdly, Having thus proved, come we now to the practical Improvement of this Doctrine, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, By way of *Information*, you may obſerve with me from the Doctrine, theſe two *Corollaries*.

1. *That no afflictions can ſpeak a man miſerable, nor are they any infallible tokens of God's diſpleaſure againſt him.*

Prone we are, to judge them hated and forſaken of God, that are in a ſuffering condition: but, be a mans afflictions what they will, never ſo many for number, never ſo grievous for quality; yet undergoing them as a Chriſtian, they are matter not of ſhame, but of glory to him, and that for which he hath cauſe to bleſs the Lord.

'Tis the moſt common thing in the world, to ſee the wicked proſper, whilſt the righteous are afflicted and in miſery; Neither doth Religion give a man any charter of Exemption from ſuffering.

If we be God's gold, we muſt not think it ſtrange to undergo a fiery tryal; Was not *Joſeph* in Priſon, *Daniel* in the Lyons Den, *Job* on the Dunghil, *David* in exile, the three Worthies in the fiery Furnace, the Apoſtles in the Goal, and Chriſt himſelf upon the croſs? How then can we cenſure a man as miſerable, and out of favour with God, becauſe obnoxious to afflictions in this preſent life, without offending againſt the generation of Gods children, whoſe lot is to bear the croſs, before they can wear the Crown?

If thoſe are pronounced bleſſed, who die in

the Lord, let us not pronounce them curſed who die for the Lord.

2. *That in all their malicious deſignes, and machinations againſt the godly, the wicked are ſtill diſappointed.*

In perſecuting, they think to ſhame Gods people, when indeed it's their glory to ſuffer as Chriſtians; fain would they bring them to curſe God, but Gods people have cauſe to bleſs him, in this behalf; when at any time the wicked oppreſs Gods people, they mean it for evil, which will ſink them to Hell, but God intends it for good, which will ſink them ſo much lower in that infernal Lake, by howmuch themſelves have been inſtrumental through their malice, to make the people of God ſit higher in glory!

Oh, little do the enemies of Gods Church and people, conſider that no weapons formed againſt *Jacob* ſhall proſper; that all their deſignes of evil againſt the righteous, ſhall be turned into good; and that by ſeeking their ruine and deſtruction, they do but promote their everlaſting happineſs and ſalvation!

Secondly, and laſtly; By way of *Exhortation*, If to ſuffer as a Chriſtian be matter, not of ſhame, but for glory to a man, and that for which he hath cauſe to bleſs the Lord; Give we diligence then, when ever we ſuffer, that we may ſuffer as Chriſtians. In this vale of tears, we muſt look, my brethren, to be fed with nothing but the bread of affliction, and daily to be drinking of the bitter waters of *Marah*: But, let me tell you, be your afflictions never ſo many for number, never ſo grievous for nature; yet hence

you

you can take no comfort, if you ſuffer them not as Chriſtians; Oh then, take heed that none of you ſuffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or as a Buſie-body in other mens matters: but if any man ſuffer, let it be as a Chriſtian; let it be for righteouſneſs ſake, let it be not for evil doing, but for well doing!

1. Conſider, *It's poſſible for a man to ſuffer much, and yet, not ſuffering as a Chriſtian, after all, to miſcarry. Though I give my body to be burned,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 3. Whence you ſee, a man poſſibly may burn as a Martyr here, and yet (which I tremble to utter) have no reward hereafter, but burn as a fire-brand in Hell to all Eternity!

Oh then, let us all take heed that we loſe not, not only the things we have wrought, but alſo the the things we have ſuffered!

Poſſible it is, my Brethren, that we may ſay, not only, Lord we have prayed in thy Name, and propheſied in thy Name; but, Lord, we have loſt houſes, and lands, and liberty in thy Name; we have been reproached in thy Name, impriſoned in thy Name, and died in thy Name; and yet, not having ſuffered all this as Chriſtians, God return us this Anſwer, *Depart from me, I know you not!*

2. Conſider, *What ever you ſuffer as Chriſtians, ſhall work for your good.* What ever our afflictions are, they are not for the worſe, but for the better; not for evil, but for good; not for our damage, but our great advantage, when we ſuffer them as Chriſtians. If at any time you be impriſoned, do but carry it as a Chriſtian, and you

turn your Priſon into a Paradi If here you be reproached, yet enduring it as a Chriſtian, it ſhall redound to your honour. If, in a word, you lie under any heavy croſs, ſo that your heart even ſinks within you, do but bear it as a Chriſtian, and this will make it as a crown of glory upon your heads, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14.

3. Conſider, *When you ſuffer as a Chriſtian, Chriſt himſelf will be graciouſly preſent with you, ſupporting you under every burden.* As our bleſſed Lord ſometimes ſaid, *I am not alone, but the Father is with me*: So may every child of God, ſuffering as a Chriſtian ſay, I am not alone, but my Chriſt is with me bearing up my ſpirit! Iſa. 43. 1, 2. *Fear not, Oh Iſrael; when thou paſſeſt through the water, I will be with thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Thus, when the three children were in the Furnace, Chriſt alſo was there preſent with them, to make the fourth, *Dan.* 3. 25. And *Paul*, though all men forſook him, when he was to anſwer before *Nero*, yet, ſaith he, *the Lord ſtood by me, and ſtrengthned me*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17.

So then, if at any time you ſuffer as Chriſtians, Chriſt will graciouſly be preſent with you; If not to ſhadow you with his wing, yet to ſupport you with his hand: If not to protect you by his Power, yet to ſuſtain you by his Grace; If not to deliver you out of troubles, yet to ſtrengthen you that you may undergo them: And ſhall not all this make you endeavour to ſuffer as Chriſtians?

My dear Friends, if Chriſt be not preſent with you, the leaſt temptation will foil you, the leaſt afflicti-

affliction will be a burden too heavy for you: I, but the moſt violent Temptation will eaſily be denied, and the ſoreſt Affliction eaſily borne, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you.

4. *Conſider we what Chriſt hath ſuffered for us, and let this make us willing to ſuffer as Chriſtians for him.* Chriſt's whole life was a *ſeries* of ſuffering; He endured contradiction of ſinners; He was falſly accuſed; maliciouſly perſecuted; deſpightfully uſed; unjuſtly condemned; and bloodily murdered; humbling Himſelf unto Death for our ſakes! Now, did the Lord Jeſus endure all this for us, and ſhall we not ſuffer ſomething as Chriſtians for him? Many there are, that will ſuffer diſgrace and death for their luſts, and ſhall we ſuffer nothing for our bleſſed Lord? Shall others die for their luſts, and ſhall not we be willing to die for Chriſt? Will a man run the hazard of ſuffering for ſome beloved corruption that will damn him, and ſhall we ſtick to ſuffer for that Chriſt, who endured ſo much to ſave us?

Our cup, my brethren, is nothing to the cup which Chriſt drank of; his cup was mixed with the wrath of God: If he then bore God's wrath for us, well may we bear the wrath of Man for Him!

5. Conſider, *Whatever we ſuffer as Chriſtians, we ſhall never be loſers thereby.* Much indeed may we loſe for Chriſt, our Eſtate, our Liberty, our Life; but, to be ſure, we ſhall never loſe any thing by Him, when ſuffering as Chriſtians. For, ſaith Chriſt, *Every one that hath forſaken Houſes, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife,*

Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Name ſake, he ſhall have an hundred fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life, Matth. 19. 29.

When (my Brethren) we ſuffer as Chriſtians, we eſpouſe God's own quarrel; and it ſtands not with his fidelity, and remunerative goodneſs that we ſhould be loſers, *Mal.* 1.10.

If no man, as the Prophet there affirms, did ever kindle a fire upon God's Altar for nought; then no man, to be ſure, ſhall ever, ſuffering as a Chriſtian, ſacrifice himſelf for God, in the fire of Martyrdom, for nought!

6. Conſider, *When we ſuffer as Chriſtians, Chriſt ſympathizeth with us; in all our afflictions counting himſelf afflicted,* Iſa.63.9. Oh, little do you know the love, the pity, the bowels, the tender compaſſion of Chriſt towards all that are ſuffering as Chriſtians! No Father can more pity his ſick child, than Chriſt pities his own, afflicted, perſecuted, and deſpiſed people. Chriſtians, ſuffer when, and where you will; provided, that you ſuffer as Chriſtians, Chriſt ſuffers then, and there, together with you.

Such are the bowel-compaſſions of Chriſt towards Believers, that he ſmarts in their pains, he bleeds in their wounds; and, when-ever the ſeed of the Serpent bruiſes their heel, it muſt needs have an influence on Chriſt their Head, who looks upon their reproaches as His reproaches, and their ſufferings as his ſufferings, counting himſelf to be perſecuted in their perſecutions.

Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me? ſo cries the Head in Heaven, whilſt *Saul* is treading upon

on the Foot on Earth, *Acts* 9. 4. Oh then, How ſhould this move us all, when-ever we ſuffer, to ſuffer as Chriſtians! Then Chriſt, as a loving Friend, layes to heart all our Afflictions; then our Redeemer pities us; then His bowels yearn over us, whilſt our Enemies are hunting for our precious life! Then, in a word, every injury we ſuſtain, every groan we ſigh out, and every drop of blood we loſe, He is touched with it!

7. Conſider, *If now we will not ſuffer as Chriſtians for Chriſt, we muſt ſhortly be brought to ſuffer as Rebels againſt Him.* We muſt all of us ſuffer, either here, as Martyrs; or hereafter, as Malefactors. He that will not die for Chriſt, when called thereto, muſt die for his Sins: And he that now ſhall refuſe to burn in the flames of Martyrdom, cannot chuſe but burn in the flames of Hell. For, ſaith Chriſt, *He that ſaveth his life, ſhall loſe it*; implying, that ſuch as think, by diſſembling conſcience, and denying Him, to ſave life temporal, ſhall (*ipſo facto*) loſe life eternal, *Matth.* 16. 25. To avoid then this dreadful doom, give diligence that you may ſuffer as Chriſtians when-ever called out thereunto. Oh, What is perſecution, to damnation? What is death temporal, to death eternal? What is the fire of Martyrdom, to the fire of Hell? What, in a word, are thoſe ſorrows that ſhall end in joy, to the torments of the damned that will never end!

8. And laſtly, conſider; *Whatever you ſuffer as Chriſtians, it will encreaſe your glory.* A ſuffering Saint is not only crowned, but his crown is more glorious, *Matth.* 19. 28. True it is, he that hath

hath the leaſt degree of glory, a door-keeper in Heaven, will have enough: But, as *Joſeph* gave to *Benjamin* a double Meſs, above the reſt of his Brethren; ſo, whoever ſuffer as Chriſtians, God will be ſure to give them a double portion of glory. The more a man ſows, the more he reaps: So, the more we *ſow in tears*, the more we ſhall *reap in joy*, Pſal. 126. 5.

Every reproachful word, when we bear it as Chriſtians, ſhall add to our glory; and every affliction ſhall ſerve to make our crown the heavier. For, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Our leight affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory*, 2 *Cor.*4.17. Obſerve, I beſeech you, the Apoſtle's *Antitheſis!* For affliction, here is glory; for leight affliction, a weight of glory; and for momentany affliction, that endures but a while, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, that endures for ever.

How then ſhould the thoughts of theſe things animate and ſteel us in all our afflictions, making us labour to ſuffer as Chriſtians, in all that we ſuffer?

Though, Chriſtians, the Croſs be heavy, yet the ſharper your croſs is, the brighter ſhall be your crown. Though every trouble attending the profeſſion of Holineſs were a ſtruggling death, and every affliction a preſent hell; yet all this, if ſuffered as Chriſtians, were not *worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall* ſhortly *be revealed in us*, Rom.8.18.

Take heed then (I beſeech you) to your ſelves, that you loſe not the things you have ſuffered, but

but that undergoing affliction here as Christians, you may hereafter be crowned by Christ, with a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, beyond all hyperbole's!

Now, that you may thus be able to suffer as Christians, carry home with you these *Four Particulars.*

1. *If ever you desire to suffer as Christians, labour to become Christians.* Before a man can suffer for righteousness sake, he himself must be righteous; neither can any man suffer as a Christian for the Truths of Christ, but he that hath in himself the Truth of Grace. A Soul without grace in a time of Persecution, is like the man that built his house upon the sands, which, when the rain descended, and the flood came, and the winds blew and beat upon it, fell; and great was the fall thereof, *Matth.* 7. 27. Most dreadful and lamentable is the state of that man, who runs upon Suffering, without laying this foundation; he that suffers without grace, his suffering can never be crowned with glory.

2. *If you would ever be able to suffer as Christians, be sure to deny your selves.* A Christian must first lay down *self*, before he can take up the *cross*: and where *self* is once renounced, the *cross* of Christ is easily born. Now, that thus you should deny your selves, there is good reason: Christ denied himself, his glory, his life for you; and will not you deny your selves for him?

3. *If ever you would suffer as Christians, make sure of a lively Faith, endeavouring to live thereby.* True Faith, is a victorious Grace; he, whose heart

heart is eſtabliſhed therewith, will eaſily trample upon the greateſt dangers. Oh, therefore labour to get, and exerciſe Faith in times of trouble; and be not you ſelf-deſtroyers by your unbelief.

It was Faith that made the Martyrs take the ſpoyling of their goods, and the loſs of their lives, ſo joyfully. Let then the mad world prate as it will, and vomit out all its gall and bitterneſs, in reproaches againſt you; yet be ſure that your hearts be eſtabliſhed by Faith, and this will make you, as Chriſtians, to ſuffer all, *Phil.* 4. 13. Faith unites the Soul to Chriſt, and ſo derives from him a kind of omnipotency into the Soul, whereby it can do, and ſuffer all things.

4. And laſtly, *If ever you would ſuffer as Chriſtians, give diligence to keep a good Conſcience.* Any ſin allowed in the Soul, will unfit for ſuffering. How can a guilty perſon ſuffer, when, for ought he knows, he is like to go, *&c.* from the fire of Martyrdom, into the flames of Hell? Hold therefore the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience, would you ſuffer at any time for the Faith, as Chriſtians. A good Conſcience will make a man abide the fiery tryal; and rejoyce in tribulation with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Goliah fenced in braſs, is not ſo ſafe as a naked man armed with purity of conſcience. Let therefore your conſcience be well informed, and then be ſure that you neither diſſemble, nor offend it at any rates. For conſider, Whilſt we hold the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience, God ſets us forth in all our tribulations, not as Malefactors to ſuffer; but as Champions to conquer, that at length we may be crowned with eternal glory.

FINIS.

SERMON III.

Eccleſ. 9. 10.

Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.

THE greateſt Intereſt of man on Earth, is, to glorifie God; and God's great deſign in this world, is, to exerciſe man; who, according as he acts his part here, ſo ſhall he be happy, or miſerable, for ever hereafter. So then, we live here (as it were) in a center, from whence are drawn two long Lines, the one leading to Death, the other to Life; the one to Heaven, the other to Hell; the one to an eternity of cœleſtial Joyes, the other to an eternity of infernal Torments. For as much then, as every one of our actions will thus have an influence upon Eternity, making either for our eternal comfort, or for our everlaſting confuſion: How nearly doth it concern us all, to exerciſe our ſelves unto godlineſs, doing all that our hand

hand findeth to do therein, with all our might; considering especially, with the Preacher in the words of my Text, that, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are all going!*

In the words of my Text (waving the Coherence of them, as not so needful to be insisted upon) you may observe these *Two Branches*, whereinto it naturally divideth it self:

1. An Exhortation to diligence in the wayes of God, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*

2. A quickning Consideration, to enforce it upon us; taken from the impossibility of doing any thing after death, that may tend to our own everlasting advantage, *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.*

For the sense of the words, so far as I mind to insist upon them, you may take it together in this one *Doctrinal Proposition.*

Doct. *That in matters relating to God's glory, and his own salvation, every man is bound to be diligent, and to do them with all his might.* In all things of this nature, we must strive as for life and death to be diligent, doing them with all our heart, with all our strength, and withall our might.

Wherever we trifle, yet in things thus relating, *&c.* we must not trifle; but, uniting our whole strength,

ſtrength, and rallying together all the powers of our ſouls, give diligence to do them with all our might.

In the proſecution of this *Doctrine*, we purpoſe, if the Lord will, to premiſe ſomething by way of *Caution*, to ſhew you when a man may be ſaid to ſerve the Lord with all his might; to let you know what thoſe things are in which we are thus bound to be diligent; to give you the *Reaſons* evincing it; and ſo to come to the Practical Improvement of the whole, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, By way of *Caution*, obſerve theſe *Two Things*:

1. Be it premiſed that, *Though in matters relating to God's glory, and his own ſalvation, every man is bound to be diligent*, &c. *yet no man may think thereby to merit at the hands of God.* We are all prone, it's true, to idolize our duties, ſeeking to graft happineſs upon the ſtock of our own righteouſneſs: But life, and ſalvation, will never be purchaſed by Doing: work as much, and do to the utmoſt for God that you can; ſerve him with all your might, ſhed rivers of tears, erect hoſpitals, give all your goods to feed the poor, and your bodies at laſt to be burned; yet all this cannot merit the leaſt degree of glory, nor ſo much as a door-keeper's place in the kingdom of God.

2. Be it alſo premiſed that, *Though in matters relating to God's glory, and his own ſalvation, every man is bound to be diligent*, &c. *yet not in his own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of Chriſt.* God calls indeed for the beſt that we have, but yet he counts

nothing good ſave what we receive from him. *Sampſon*'s ſtrength lay in his hair; ſo the ſtrength of every Chriſtian lies all in Chriſt, *Phil.* 4. 13. A ſtone hath no ſtrength to mount a-loft, but what it receives from the arm that throws it: ſo, no man hath any ſtrength to lay out for Chriſt, but what he receives from Him, *Joh.* 15. 5.

Secondly, A man may be ſaid to lay out himſelf in things relating to God's glory, and his own ſalvation, with all his might;

1. *When he doth them ſincerely and with all his heart.* The heart of a man, is the ſtrength of a man; he then that comes to every duty, deſiring to do them ſincerely, and with all his heart, to be ſure he doth them with all his might, 2 *King.* 23. 25. Would ye then be counted diligent in the duties of God's Worſhip, ſee then that you do them ſincerely, and with all your heart. A diligent hand may pleaſe men; but it's only an upright heart that can pleaſe the Lord.

2. *When a man doth them reſolutely, holding on in a way of obedience againſt all diſcouragements.* It's the character of a ſluggard, to cry out, There is a Lion in the way, and to prefer ſafety before duty: But a man that ſerves God with all his might, come what will, tempeſts or fair weather, proſperity or adverſity, life or death, yet ſtill he holds on in a way of obedience, reſolving to go through with the work of the Lord.

3. *When a man doth them ſtrenuouſly, rallying together all the powers of his Soul, and uniting his whole ſtrength, as willing to ſpend, and be ſpent, in the ſervice of God*, Pſal. 103. 1. Thus when we lay

forth

forth our ſelves to our utmoſt, not being ſloathful in buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, then ſerve we the Lord with all our might.

4. *When a man doth them univerſally, making it the great buſineſs of his life, to walk before God in all dutiful obedience to all his commandments.* He that ſerves the Lord with all his might, he is not zealous in ſome things, and remiſs in others; but makes a conſcience of every duty, endeavouring to obſerve all the commandments of God, as the work of his life.

Thirdly, The things relating to God's glory, and our own ſalvation, which every man is bound to do with all his might, are theſe:

1. *Converſion.* The firſt thing which every man, born into the world, ſhould look after, is, To to be new born; to be tranſlated out of a ſtate of Nature, into a ſtate of Grace, *Joh.* 3. 3. My Brethren, we muſt firſt become new Creatures, before we can poſſibly enter into the new *Jeruſalem*, Rev. 21. 27. Sanctification paves the way to Salvation; and Holineſs here, to Happineſs and Glory hereafter.

Give diligence then to become new creatures: Alas! you muſt be ſavingly converted, or dreadfully confounded; either throughly changed by grace, or eternally damned for want of grace.

2. *Repentance.* A great part of our work in this world, is, To be undoing, by Repentance, whatever we have done amiſs, *Luk.* 13. 3. We have all been ſinners in *Sion*, and muſt therefore all of us give diligence to be mourners in *Sion*. We have filled God's Books with our debts, and

muſt ſtrive therefore to fill his Bottle with our tears. And is it not better, that we ſhould ſhed repenting-tears, than deſpairing-tears? Is it not better that we ſhould ſorrow a little for ſin on Earth, than eternally weep and howl for ſin in Hell?

3. *Faith in Chriſt.* To believe in Chriſt, is called the work of God; he hath commanded it, and we (would we ever pleaſe him) muſt accordingly do it, *Joh.* 6.29. Labour we then by Faith to believe in Chriſt, who alone is able to skreen us for God's hot diſpleaſure.

4. *Aſſurance.* When riches, when honours, when liberty, when friends, and life it ſelfe, cannot be made ſure; yet our intereſt in Chriſt, and our right to eternal life may be made ſure, and ſhould we not then give diligence to have it ſo? 2 *Pet.* 1.10. Oh, little do you, that ſleight it, know the comfort of a well-grounded Aſſurance, and the benefit accrewing thence to the people of God! Why then, will you ſtill put Eternity upon an adventure? Are you ſtill reſolved to reſt ſecure, not knowing what is like to become of your immortal Souls in another world, whether Death or Life, whether Heaven or Hell, whether eternal Joyes or eternal Torments, ſhall be your portion?

5. *Mortification.* The body of Death muſt be ſlain that we may live: And that we may not die eternally for ſin, we muſt dayly give all diligence to die to ſin, *Rom.* 8.13. Thoſe ſins which are left unmortified, do alwayes prove mortal: And where ever Sin is ſuffered to live, that Soul muſt die eternally, and be damned for ever. And

do

do you love (my Brethren) your luſts better than your own lives? or, Will the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, make amends for the loſs of heaven, and eternal glory?

6. *Growth in Grace.* A Chriſtian's Graces are yet in their non-age; he had need therefore encreaſe his ſtock, ſtriving with all his might, to bring forth more fruit. For it is, you muſt know, with Grace as with Fire; if it be not blown up and encreaſed, it will ſoon decay. Let your Grace, therefore, be like the morning light, more and more encreaſing to the full Meridian of eternal Glory.

7. *Communion with God.* A man is no further a Chriſtian, than he hath Communion with God in Chriſt; endeavouring at all times to walk in that holy fellowſhip, *Gen. 6. 9.* Let then your whole life be a life of Communion with the God of Heaven; be much in Cloſet-prayer, in heavenly Meditation, and in communing often with your own heart, as an excellent help to Communion with God himſelf. Oh, taſte and ſee, how ſweet a thing it is to hold Communion with God. As a Paradiſe of all delights, as a Cabinet of precious cordials; ſuch is Communion with God to all that enjoy it. He that lives in Communion with God on Earth, doth already dwell in the ſuburbs of Heaven, rejoycing with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

8. And laſtly, *Perſeverance in Grace.* A good Progreſs and Concluſion is as neceſſary to life, and muſt as well be looked after, as a good Beginning. It's not enough that we ſet out for God at the firſt, but we muſt alſo give diligence to

hold on with God to the laſt. Strive we therefore, with all our might, to hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith, perſevering in Grace, till we come to glory: for, what elſe avails your running, if in caſe you ſit down before you come to the Goal? What profit can you reap by ſowing the ſeed of Grace, if you fall away before the harveſt of eternal Glory? What, in a word, can you expect, or, where is the crown you look for, if you quit the Field, and grow weary of contending before the conflict be over?

Fourthly, The *Reaſons* why every man in things relating to God's glory, and his own ſalvaion, ſhould be diligent, endeavouring to do them with all his might, are theſe:

1. *Becauſe the main end of every mans life, is to glorifie God, and to work out his own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling.* The Factor is not imployed abroad to take his pleaſure, but to negotiate for his Maſter: So, God the great Maſter of the world, he ſent none of us hither to ſpend our money for that which is not bread, but to diſpatch the things that relate to his Glory, and our Salvation; ſo that good reaſon there is, why we ſhould do them with all our might. For, better it were that we ſhould loſe our life, than the end of our living; Better it is, that we had never been at all, than that we ſhould not attain the end of our beeing.

2. *Becauſe the Lord himſelf hath commanded us to be diligent, and to do the duties of his Worſhip, with all our might.* 'Tis not a thing arbitrary and left to our own choyce, whether we will be diligent in, &c. but he that commands *the Winds and*

the

the Seas, and they obey him, he alſo hath commanded us that we ſhould be ſo, *Luke* 13.29.

About things of this nature, we are commanded to give all diligence, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. So that if there be reaſon why the creature ſhould obey the Creator, if there be any reaſon, why we ſhould obſerve the commands of God, that gave us our beeing, our life, and all our comforts; the ſame reaſon there is, why in the duties of Gods worſhip, we ſhould all be diligent, endeavouring to do them with all our might.

3. *Becauſe there is no other way wherein to obtain the reward of Eternal life.* God hath enacted a Law in Paradiſe, that no man ſhall eat of the Tree of Life, but in the ſweat of his own brows. There are many Lines leading to the Center; but to the Heavenly Center, there is but one Line leading to it, and that is, To be diligent in the ways of God, endeavouring to do them with all our might. For there can be no Crown, without contending; no recompence, without labour and diligence.

4. *Becauſe the great end of our Redemption, was, that in things relating to Gods glory, and our own Salvation, we might be diligent, doing them with all our might.* Our bleſſed Lord, who purchaſed us by his own blood, to be a peculiar people to himſelf, did it for this end, that we might be *Zealous of good works*, *Tit.* 2.14.

Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered for us, that we might with greater diligence obey him. He laid down his life for us, that we might lay forth our lives for him. He ſpent himſelf in the work of our

Redemption, that we might more willingly ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of God.

If then, our Redemption thus coſt Chriſt his blood, ſhall it not coſt us our ſweat? Did Chriſt groan, and bleed, and die, to make us diligent; and is there not then good reaſon why we ſhould be ſo?

5. *Becauſe, of the worth and ſurpaſſing excellency of things, thus relating to Gods Glory, and our own Salvation.* If there be any thing excellent in the world, 'its the Glory of God who made the world; and if any thing of real worth to the children of men, if any thing that can miniſter comfort, and crown them with everlaſting happineſs, to be ſure 'its their own Salvation: How diligent then ſhould they be, how earneſtly ſhould they ſtrive, to lay forth themſelves with all their might; how willingly ſhould they ſpend, and be ſpent in perſuite of things ſo tranſcendently Glorious, and Excellent?

6. And laſtly, *Becauſe, if now we neglect theſe things, not doing them with all our might, hereafter it will be too late to ſet about them.* Too late ſhall you work when once you are come into the ſtate of the dead; And ſhall not this make us double our diligence in the Land of the Living?

When God raigned *Manna* from Heaven, it was to be gathered on the ſix days of the week, but on the ſeventh it was not to be found: So, the Spiritual *Manna* of Faith, Repentance, and other Graces, is to be gathered only in the ſix days of this life; if you ſeek it after, you come too late, you come a day after the Fair, it will not be found.

Now

Now, there is poſſibility of doing the work of God, of laying up for our ſelves a treaſure in Heaven, of making our calling and election ſure, of obtaining Grace, and finding Mercy: But then, the Door of Mercy will for ever be ſhut againſt us, then Grace and Glory, if we now be negligent, will be loſt for ever; though then you ſhould ſeek them with tears, yea with tears of blood, yet you ſhall never find them! For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave, whither we are all of us now haſtning!

Fiftly, and laſtly; Having both explained and comfirmed the Doctrine, come we now to the Practical Improvement of it, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Now the *Uſe* will be of { *Information*, *Reprehenſion*, and *Inſtruction*.

Firſt, By way of *Information*, we may learn theſe two things.

1. *That Religion is no ſuch an eaſie Province, nor Salvation ſo facil to be obtained, as moſt imagine.* My Doctrine aſſerts the neceſſity of laying out our ſelves in things relating to Gods glory, and our own Salvation with all our might; And may we not thence infer, that Religion is no idle exerciſe, but a buſineſs of greateſt intention, and we muſt all travel far, dig deep, work hard, would we ever get the Pearl of Salvation, or find the Mine of Eternal Felicity.

Many

Many there are, who fancy a fine eaſie way to Heaven, dreaming that men may come there without ſo much ado: But, my text calls for diligence in things relating to Gods glory, and our own Salvation, commanding us to do them with all our might.

Difficilia, quæ pulchra. Things of ſo great excellency, are never obtained, but with much labour, and difficulty. No man can be truly religious, that is not laborious and diligent: nor can any man ever take the Kingdom of Heaven, without offering violence thereto, *Mat.* 11. 12.

Heaven-Gate (as one well obſerves) is not like that Iron-gate that opened to *Peter* of its own accord: No, firſt we muſt ſtrive and knock, before ever God will hear, and open to us. He therefore that thinks Religion an idle ſpeculation, was never yet truly religious; and he that fancies the way to Heaven and Glory eaſie, to to be ſure he never yet ſet foot in the right way, which is alwayes attended with many difficulties.

There are ſo many Commands to be obeyed, ſo many promiſes to be believed, ſo many *Anakims* to be encountred, ſo many temptations to be reſiſted, and ſo many ſins to be ſubdued, that he muſt needs be groſly ignorant of all theſe, who counts Religion an eaſie Province, and thinks Salvation may be obtained, without ſo much ado.

Indeed, *the Gate is wide, and the way broad, that leadeth to deſtruction*. But, Scripture and your own Experience will everlaſtingly prove, that, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.*

To

To be truly Religious, is to be in an Agony, ſtriving, as for a matter of life and death, to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, *Luke* 13. 24. Religion is a ſpiritual Race, and that clearly proves that 'tis not an idle wiſh, nor an heartleſs dead prayer, but a putting forward with all our might, with all ſpeed and vigour of affection, that will win the prize of Eternal life, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24.

Would you ever be truly Religious, and obtain Salvation, you muſt wholly deny your ſelves, embrace a crucified Chriſt, die dayly to ſin, live above the world, and obey the whole will of God with all your might: And if all this be eaſie to men compaſſed about with infirmities, what then ſhall we call difficult?

2. *That the blind world hath no cauſe to cenſure Gods children for their diligence, in things relating to Gods glory, and their own Salvation, to be doing them with all their might, being nothing but what God himſelf hath commanded them.*

Unſanctified men and women, do not doubt but a man may go to Heaven without ſo much a-do, counting all the zealous paſſages, and ſanctified ſingularities of Gods people no better than madneſs, and ſaying of them all, as *Judas* of the Oyntment, *To what purpoſe is this waſte*? *Mat.* 26. 8. They think, it's waſte time to pray ſo frequently, and waſt ſtrength to pray ſo fervently: But, is it any thing more than what God hath required?

Are we not commanded to ſerve the Lord, *with all our ſtrength, and heart, and might*? Are we not commanded to *ſtrive* as in a bloody Agony, *that we may enter in at the ſtrait Gate*? Are we not

not commanded, *to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling, to give diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure*, and that we ſhould not be ſlothful in things relating to Gods glory, and our own Salvation; but, *fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord*? Who then is moſt worthy to be cenſured, Gods people for obeying, or the wicked for reſiſting Gods holy will? Becauſe God's people dare not ſlight his commands, nor be negligent when he calls them to be diligent; will you therefore upbraid them with it, reproaching them as furious Zealots, men of violent ſpirits, and guilty a needleſs Preciſeneſs, Indiſcretion, and Madneſs?

Will you connt them furiouſly violent, who are only religiouſly diligent in the wayes of God? will you ſay, What need ſo much a-do? why cannot you content your ſelves, to be, and do, as others? What need you be ſo ſtrict, ſo preciſe, and ſo diligent in all your walkings, when the Soveraign Majeſty of all the world commands them to be ſo? What is this, but, like *Goliah*, to defie the Living God, and to exalt your own folly, above Gods infinite Wiſdom? Doth God command diligence, and will you dare to Apologize for negligence in his ways? Hath he ſeen good in his Wiſdom, to call for the beſt at the hands of his own people, commanding them to ſerve him with all their ſtrength, with all their heart, and with all their might, and dare you cenſure them as Indiſcreet, Furious, and Violent for ſo doing? Oh how ſpeechleſs and confounded will you be, when God ſhall bring you to Judgment for theſe things! Is it not better for

the

the people of God to obey him, commanding them to be laborious and diligent, than that they ſhould hearken to you, endeavouring to make them ſlothful and negligent in Heavens-way?

Secondly, By way of *Reprehenſion*. Out of this Doctrine, as out of a ſpiritual Quiver, I may draw ſeveral Arrows of Reproof, that may juſtly pierce, and wound, and ſmite to the heart, all thoſe that offend againſt it.

1. *It reproves thoſe who are diligent in things prejudicial to Gods Glory, and their own Salvation, purſuing them with all their might.* Many ſuch profane Monſters there are in the world, who go to Hell in the ſweat of their brows, taking as much pains to damn, as others to ſave their own ſouls. And is not this, I beſeech you, the practiſe of all wicked and ungodly perſons, who are eager in purſuit of carnal pleaſures, putting forth themſelves to the utmoſt, and drawing out their ſtrength in ways of wickedneſs, *Jer.* 8. 6. Should you be diligent to glorifie God, and are you grown violent to diſhonour him? Should you ſtrive with all your might to ſave your ſouls; and will you then exhauſt your ſtrength in the ways of ſin, to damn them? You think (I am confident) of no ſuch thing, as diſhonouring God; you intend nothing leſs, than the damnation of your own ſouls, by your wicked, and ungodly practiſes: but, though not intentionally, yet is not God eventually diſhonoured, and your ſouls made obnoxious to Eternal miſery, by every ſin? Oh then! how great is your folly, who in ſtead of being diligent to glorifie God, are violent

lent

lent to dishonour him, and in stead of striving to save, are dayly labouring to damn your immortal souls. Is this all the duty you owe to God? Is this all the love you bear to your own souls? Oh thou that art a profane wretch, an ungodly sinner, committing sin without fear, and living in it without remorse; consider this, Do thy oaths, thy drunkenness, thy sensual pleasures, and carnal delights, lead to Heaven? or do they not indeed pave the way to Hell, and Eternal Perdition?

As our blessed Lord said, *Do men gather grapes of Thorns, or figs of Thistles?* So, comparing thy works to Trees, and their reward to Fruits; canst thou ever think to gather the good fruit of Eternal glory, from off the evil Trees of thy sinful and ungodly practises? Canst thou think to find the living amongst the dead, to go to Heaven in the way that leads to Hell, to take thy pleasure in sin here, and yet hereafter to partake of those unperishable pleasures at God's right Hand for evermore?

Well, begin thy sins never so Comical, yet to be sure they will end Tragical. Now possibly they may seem sweet, but will they be so when turned into Gall and Wormwood, when punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power?

Before an Earth-quake there usually goes a Calm: So, your calm of sensual delight in the wayes of sin, will but usher in upon you, the storm of God's fierce Wrath, and everlasting Vengeance!

2. *It reproves those, who though they desire to be saved*

ſaved, and made everlaſtingly happy, will yet take no pains to be ſanctified, and made holy; but ſtand idle in Gods Vineyard, all the day long. Many there are that could well be content to have glory from God, but they will be at no coſt to bring glory to him: They could like well of Salvation, but they like not to work it out, *with Fear and Trembling.*

But have you any greater work in the world to do, than to look after God Glory, and your own Salvation? Is the Way narrow, and the Gate ſtrait that leads to life, and will you not ſtrive to enter in thereat? Is Heaven a Kingdom, and that of Eternal glory that can never be moved, and have you no violence to offer to it? Will you ſtill ſtand idle in Gods Vineyard, and ſit down ſatisfied with an empty form?

Si non vertamus Verba in Opera, Verba in Verbera convertet Deus. If, my Brethren, we turn not our words into works, ſetting about the buſineſs of religion in good earneſt & with all our might, God will turn our words into blows. Your External profeſſion, if reſted in, will but aggravate your Eternal damnation: and the more you have of the form of godlineſs, the more ſeverely will God puniſh you at length, for denying the power thereof!

Why then will you ſtill be idle, not ſhaking off ſloth and formality, in things relating to Gods glory, and your own Salvation, that you may do them with all your might?

My Beloved, no Diligence for God, no Indulgence from him; no Working for him, no Reſting with him. *Do and live,* in a well explained

ſenſe

ſenſe, is Evangelical Language, as well as Legal; do the will of God on earth with all your might, would you never live with God in Heaven. Find out a new Heaven if you can; for a new way to the old Heaven, you ſhall never find: You ſhall never eat bread in the Kingdom of Heaven, but in the ſweat of your own brows!

3. *It reproves thoſe who were ſomtimes diligent in things relating to Gods Glory, and their own Salvation, doing them with all their might, but are now grown remiſs, and their zeal is abated.* Many, like *Jehu*, have driven on furiouſly in Religion, whoſe Chariot-wheels have yet, within a while, been taken off: But if your diligence be not crowned with perſeverance, it will never crown you. By leaving off to be diligent in the buſineſs of Religion, you un-ravel all that you had done before, and ſo loſe your reward; and will this be matter of comfort in a dying hour?

Oh! what evil have you ever found in God's ways, that you are thus grown weary of them? or do you think to get to Heaven with leſs a-do?

Have you not, my Brethren, as much need of diligence now as ever? Is not the way as narrow, and the gate that leads to Life as ſtrait as ever it was? Hath not your time out-run your work, are you not much caſt behind, and do you not meet with as many oppoſitions, now as ever? Is not God, in a word, as much to be loved, and ſin to hated? Is not Hell as much to be ſhunned, and Heaven as worthy to be taken by violence now, as ever it was? How then dare you grow remiſſe, abate of your former zeal, and give way to trifling in matters of ſuch great and everlaſting concernment? You

You were ſomtime diligent in Prayer and Meditation, in Hearing, and holy Conference ſerving God in all the duties of his worſhip with all your might; and will you not now look to your ſelves, that you loſe not the things which you have wrought, but at length may receive a full reward? Oh! conſider whence you are fallen, be zealous and repent, that you may do your firſt works, and that with as great a proportion of zeal and diligence as ever you did. For conſider, Not he that begins, but he that holds on to work and toyl, and ſweat for God to the end, ſhall at length reſt from his labours, and be crowned with Eternal glory!

4. And laſtly, *It reproves thoſe who procraſtinate this duty, reſolving to be diligent in things relating to Gods glory, and their own Salvation, but not till old Age; or at leaſt, not yet.* How many are there among us, who vainly talk of working for Heaven, when they are going from the place of working to the place of rewarding; How many, who think of doing the greateſt works, to Believe, Repent, and Reform their lives, when they have leaſt ſtrength, and opportunity to do them, as being ready to go down into the chambers of Death?

Men will not know the day of their viſitation, nor work therein, but like the ſluggard, cry, A little more ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the arms to ſleep, till Sin, Satan, Hell, come like armed men upon them, ſo that they are found unable to reſiſt them. In matters of this life, we can all take the time, and lay hold on the firſt opportunity; If the body be diſeaſed,

we presently send to the Physician; if fire be kindled in our house, we instantly run for water to quench it; if a City be besieged, like the men of *Gideon*, we speedily send for strength to raise it: And is it not sad, that we (whose souls are so dangerously diseased, an infernal fire burning within us, and an Army of unclean spirits laying siege against us) should not stir, nor strive, nor run, to get deliverance?

Oh that once you would seriously consider, how dangerous it is to adjorn in matters of Religion! *Cesar*'s deferring to read his Letter before he went to the Senate-House, cost him his life: So thy deferring to set about matters of Religion, may cost thee thy life, may cost thee the loss of God in Christ, of Heaven, and Eternal glory, and then thou art undone for ever!

Is it not just that such as have given their strength to the Devil, and at last think to lay their bones upon God's Altar, should be sacrificed in the fire of Gods wrath, and Eternal displeasure? Why should God hear you calling for mercy, that would not hear him calling you to duty? Why should God give you his Grace to repent in the time of Old Age and sickness, who in the time of Youth, and Health, have refused the Grace of Repentance?

My Brethren, though true Repentance be never too late, yet late Repentance is seldome true. That Reformation is seldom true-hearted, which is Gray-headed. The repentance of a sick man, is usually a sick repentance: as the repentance of a dying man, is for the most part a dead repentance. Believe it, believe it, Sinners, it's too much

much for one man, to look after a dead ſoul, and a dying body; after a body ſo ſick that it cannot live, and a ſoul ſo ſick, that it dare not die, together! When the hands ſhake, the lips quiver, the ſinews ſhrink, and the heart faints, ſo that you have no might left in you; Is this a time to be diligent about matters of Eternal conſequence? can you now be able to do them with all your might? When you can hardly turn your bodies on your bed, can you then think your ſelves able to turn your ſouls unto God?

When you are dying, and find it enough to grapple with the pangs of death temporal, will you then only begin to think of living unto God, to prevent the torments of death eternal? Oh! how can you think to work when the time of working is over, and the night upon you; or how can you think of laying forth your ſelves in matters of Religion with all your ſtrength, when your ſtrength is all gone! Oh whilſt yet you have life and ſtrength, ſtand not idle, but up and be doing for Eternity! Caſt up your accounts, before you come to give up your accounts! Oh now, neglect not your ſeed-time, but be ſowing to the Spirit with all your might, if ever you expect an harveſt of Eternal Glory!

Thirdly, and laſtly; By way of *Inſtruction*, let this teach us all no longer to trifle, but to be diligent in things relating to Gods glory, and our own Salvation, endeavouring to do them with all our might. Oh let us not be ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord! *Rom.* 12. 11.

Let us not ſtand idle all the day, but rallying

together all the powers of our ſouls, let us lay forth our ſelves, in matters of Eternity, with all our might. Whereas we have formerly been negligent, let us now rouze up our ſelves, giving all diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. Let us ſpend no longer our money for that which is not bread, and our labour for that which cannot ſatisfie; but let us willingly ſpend, and be ſpent, in the ſervice of God. Let us no longer work for a thing of nought, but let us work out our own Salvation, *with fear and trembling.*

1. Conſider, *How men ſtand affected to their creature-enjoyments, how induſtrious they are for the world, riſing early, going to bed late, and compaſſing Sea and Land, for things that periſh in the uſing.* And ſhall we then be ſtupid and heartleſs, in matters of Religion? Shall they be ſo diligent for their bodies, and ſhall we be negligent in things that relate to our immortal ſouls? Oh why ſhould any men in the world be more active for earth, than we for Heaven! Why ſhould they be more violent for a Feather, a Bubble, than we for a Kingdom of Eternal glory?

2. Conſider, *Not to lay forth our ſelves in matters of Religion,* &c. *is to undervalue, and to make leight of them*; And how can we ever eſcape, neglecting ſo great Salvation! *Heb.* 2. 3. Men are never rightly affected to the Kingdom of Heaven, till they grow *Violent*, reſolving *to take it by force*, *Mat.* 11. 12. We cannot have the world without labour, and can we then look for God in Chriſt, for Heaven and Eternal glory at a lower rate? Do men dig for Gold, yea for Lead, and Coal,

Coal, and can we expect with leſs diligence, that Pearl of great price, or Mine of Eternal glory? Oh what is this, but to make leight of theſe Eternal concernments! Yea, what is it, but to prefer Earth before Heaven, and *the meat that periſheth, before the Meat that endureth to Eternal Life? John* 6. 27.

3. Conſider, *You can never too much lay forth your ſelves in matters relating to Gods glory, and your own Salvation.* Let the blind world ſay what it will, and cry out of God's people, as men that are guilty of Indiſcretion, Wild-fire, and Madneſs, making more a-do than needs: yet, to be ſure, true Religion knows no Exceſs, you can never favour too much of Holineſs, nor do too much to promote your everlaſting happineſs. Indeed, when men will accumulate precepts of their own, and ceremonies of their own, giving more to God than he hath required by the rule of Worſhip, here the leaſt addition is too much: but, contenting your ſelves with Gods own inſtituted Worſhip, and in the way that himſelf hath preſcribed, here you need fear no exceſs, but muſt ſtrive to ſerve the Lord, *with all your heart, with all your ſoul, with all your mind, and with all your ſtrength*, Mark 12. 30. For, *In eo non poteſt eſſe nimium, quod eſſe maximum debet.*

Conſider a little, I beſeech you, and ponder the matter; Can you do too much to deliver your ſouls from the wrath to come, from the torments of Hell, from the bitter howlings, and lamentation of everlaſting burnings, together with the vengeance of eternal fire? Can you do too much for that God that made you, or for that

Christ who hath redeemed you with his own blood? Is not he upon equal terms with you, nay, is he not before hand with you? If he call upon you to be zealous, was not he first consumed with zeal in your behalf? If he call you out to bear the Cross, did he not first bear a greater cross for your sake? Can you, in one word, do too much for a crown of Life, too much for an heavenly Kingdom, too much for a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory? Certainly, my Beloved, you may assoon do too much to escape the vengeance of eternal Fire, too much for God in Christ, for Heaven, and Eternal glory, as ever do too much in the matters of true Religion, in the duties of Gods Worship; Why will you not then be diligent therein, endeavouring to do them with all your might?

4. Consider, *In false Religions, there are none more magnified than the diligent, who lay out themselves therein, with all their might.* The *Turks* are zealous of their *Mahomet*, the *Sidonians* of *Bell* and *Dragon*, the Priests of *Baal* of their Idol, the *Papists* of their Reliques, Crucifixes, Images; and each Sect of their own superstitious Observances: but yet none amongst them all so much admired as those that out-strip their fellows in an excess of Superstition. Thus in *Popery*, he that is most cruel to his own flesh, most assiduous at his Beads, most macerated with superstitious Penance, and most frequently prostrated before his Idols, is of all other most admired for the greatest Saint. Oh, why should not an holy strictness be as much endeavoured, and admired, as a superstitious strictness! Why should not exactness

neſs, diligence, and induſtry, be as much perſued in a true, as in a falſe Religion? Why ſhould any do more for their dumb Idols, than we for the glory, and in the ſervice, of the Living God?

5. Conſider, *You can have no further evidence of the truth of your Grace, than you are diligent in the duties of Gods Worſhip, endeavouring to do them with all your might. Qui non zelat, non amat*, is a ſure rule; He that hath no zeal for God, hath no love to him; And, to be ſure, that man had never yet the leaſt mite of grace in his ſoul, who is not diligent in things that relate to Gods glory, and his own Salvation, endeavouring to do them with all his might. For grace, you muſt know, puts no bounds to holineſs, ſaying, Hitherto ſhalt thou go and no further. He that makes God his end, thinks he can never have enough of God, nor do too much for God. Such an one, though his actions of holineſs, and his forwardneſs in the wayes of God, over-run his credit, and overthrow his eſtate in the world; yet he cares not, at leaſt he never repents it. For, it is not his end to ſerve himſelf, but to ſerve the God of Heaven, who at length will make amends for all, upon himſelf, *Acts* 21. 13.

What is it then, my Brethren, that your hearts pant after, and you moſt deſire, longing to be aſſured of it? Is it not, that you are paſſed already from Death to Life, that the finger of God hath been at work with you, tranſlating you out of a ſtate of Nature, into a ſtate of Grace? Is it not, to be ſhort, that your ſpirits ſhall be ſaved in the day of the Lord, that you are already

ſanctified here, and ſhall therefore be ſaved hereafter: Oh, this is the way to put all out of doubt, be willing to ſpend, and be ſpent, in the duties of Gods Worſhip, endeavouring at all times to d› them with all your might!

Many amongſt us complain for want of Aſſurance, and no wonder, for they want that Diligence whereby they ſhould make their Calling and Election ſure! 2 *Pet.* 1. 10.

6. Conſider, *How diligent you have formerly been in the ways of ſin, and will you not much more be diligent in the ways of God, in things relating to his Glory, and your own everlaſting Felicity?* Men that have imployed their Members, as inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto iniquity, ſhould not they much more imploy their Members as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs, unto Holineſs? Men that have ſpent their time, exhauſting their ſtrength in the ſervice of Satan; ſhould not they much more give diligence to redeem their time, and lay out their ſtrength in the ſervice of God?

In the ways of ſin you were never tyred, but went on indefatigably towards Hell, purſuing with all your might, thoſe things which have no fruit but ſhame, nor no wages but death; I, but in the ſervice of God, you have a prize before you, an abiding City, an Immarceſcible Crown of Life to fix your thoughts upon; Why then ſhould you not, by way of holy revenge, be diligent therein, endeavouring to do Gods will with all your ſtrength, and heart, and might? To have been diligent, my Brethren, in the wayes of of ſin, and yet now to be negligent in the ways of God; to conſume our ſtrength in making

proviſion for the fleſh, & not be willing to ſpend and be ſpent in making proviſion againſt eternity for our immortal Souls; Oh, me thinks, this ſhould ſhame us, and make us double our diligence in Heaven's way, for the time to come!

7. Conſider, *How much work you have lying upon your hands, and let that make you with diligence ſet about it, reſolving to do it with all your might.* In Chriſtianity, the whole frame and conſtitution of a man, muſt be changed; and all that ever he did amiſs, muſt be undone again by Repentance. There is Self to de denied, there is the World to be crucified, there is the Fleſh to be mortified, with all its inordinate affections and luſts; there is alſo the Will of God in all things to be obſerved, and, is this a ſmall matter, doth it not call for diligence? doth it not call for all manner of ſerious endeavours at our hands?

Have we a God to ſerve, and a Soul to ſave? have we ſo many Temptations to overcome, ſo many Corruptions to ſhake off, ſo many Myſteries to ſtudy, ſo many Promiſes to believe, ſo many Works to finiſh, ſo many Commands of God to be obeyed, and that with all our heart, and with all our might; and yet ſhall we dare to ſtand idle, and be ſloathful? Oh, this multiplicity of buſineſs that lies upon our hands, ſhould make us up, and be doing with all our might. You may talk much, but, if you lay not your bones to the work, you can never go through it.

8. Conſider, *The life of Religion ſtands mainly in the diligent purſuit of God's glory, and our own ſalvation, and in the doing of things relating thereto,*

to, with all our might. The blind world doats upon I know not what *mediocrities* in Religion, thinking it's hard if men cannot be ſaved without ſo much a-do: But the truth is, A man is never Religious indeed, nor rightly affected towards the kingdom of Heaven, till he purſue it with ſo much zeal, contention, and holy violence, that men count him to be beſide himſelf. For ſo we find the carnal Relations of our bleſſed Lord judged of Him; Who, when he was zealous in doing his Father's Will, and ſo intent upon it, that He had no leiſure to eat his meat, they went out to lay hold of him, for they ſaid, *He is beſide himſelf*, Mark 3. 21. The like cenſure doth *Feſtus* paſs upon diligent *Paul*, when earneſtly endeavouring to win men to the Goſpel, *Paul* (ſaith he) *Thou art beſide thy ſelf, much learning doth make thee mad*, Acts 26. 24. To be carried on with an holy violence in our Chriſtian race, it's the very life and ſoul of Chriſtianity. That which the bellows are to the forge, diligence is to the ſoul, an inkindler of grace; that which natural heat is to the body, diligence is to the ſpirit, a preſerver of grace; it's the quinteſſence of graces diſtilled; the marrow, and life of Religion, the higheſt pitch, and hyperbole of Holineſs. Oh then, give diligence in all the duties of God's Worſhip, and ſee that you do them with all your might. If (my Brethren) you turn not your Notions of God, into zealous Motions for Him, and his glory, they will never avail you. For the Kingdom of God conſiſteth not in word, but in Power; you cannot take it by negligence, but, if ever you will enter therein,

it

it muſt be by violence. In this reſpect, the kingdom of Heaven may well be compared to *Canaan*, which was, though a Land of Promiſe, yet of Conqueſt too!

9. Conſider, *How eagerly, and with what might, wicked men go on in a courſe of ungodlineſs, and let this make you double your diligence in the wayes of holineſs.* 'Tis ſaid of wicked men, That *they ſleep not, except they have done miſchief:* Now, ſhall ſleep depart from them in doing evil, and ſhall we be ſlothful, ſuffering ſleep to ſeize upon us in doing that which is good? Wicked men, ſaith the Prophet, do evil *with both hands* earneſtly, and ſhall not we be diligent, doing good *with both our hands*, Micah 7. 3?

Wicked men are as ſwift Dromedaries in the wayes of ſin, and ſhall we be as dull Aſſes in the ſervice of God? And ſhall they be more diligent in doing ſuch things as will damn them, than we in purſuit of ſuch things as will certainly ſave us? Shall they take more pains to go to Hell, than we to go to Heaven? What reaſon can you ſee for this, unleſs men could imagine that damnation is more deſirable than ſalvation; and hell to be choſen before heaven and eternal glory.

10. Conſider, *There is nothing more odious and diſpleaſing to the God of Heaven, than for men to be ſlothful in the duties of his Worſhip, not ſtriving to do them with all their might?* Such men are neither *hot nor cold*, and therefore God threatens to *ſpue them out of his mouth*; giving us clearly thereby to underſtand, how highly diſpleaſing it is to him, to ſee us ſlothful, out-ſided, and negligent

gent in the duties of his Worſhip, *Rev.* 3. 16. Againſt none doth God's wrath wax more hot, than againſt ſuch as are cold in his ſervice. The formality of ſuch men is as odious to him, as other mens open hoſtility.

If therefore you deſire not the frowns, but the ſmiles of the God whom you Worſhip; if you would not offend but pleaſe him, and find favour in his ſight, be not ſlothful, but diligent in all the duties of his Worſhip, endeavouring to do them with all your might!

11. Conſider, *All thoſe that are negligent in the duties of God's Worſhip, not labouring to do them with all their might, lie under a curſe*, Jer. 48. 10. *Curſed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* If you be negligent in holy Exerciſes, not laying forth your ſelves with all your might you deal with God deceitfully, and therefore you are curſed with a curſe, becauſe, *having a Male in your flock, you offer unto God a corrupt thing*, *Mal.* 1. 14. And ſhall not all this quicken you to diligence in the wayes of God? Shall not this make you lay forth your ſelves with all your might? Oh, how can you ſtand under ſo dreadful a curſe! Or, Who is there in all the world that can bleſs you, if the curſe of God abide upon you? As *Iſaac* ſaid of *Jacob*, *I have bleſſed him, yea, and he ſhall be bleſſed:* So, thou that art ſlothful in the wayes of God, thou that art negligent, out-ſided, and formal in Religious exerciſes, not doing them with all thy might, the God of Heaven hath curſed thee; yea, and thou ſhalt be curſed.

12. Conſider, *To be diligent in things relating*

to

to God's glory, and your own ſalvation, doing them with all your might, is that wherein your ſelves are moſt neerly concerned Whatever you lay out for God on Earth, you do but lay up for your ſelves in Heaven; and ſhall not this quicken you? To be doing with all our might the Will of God, is not ſo much our duty, as our priviledge; there's Salvation in every one of God's Commandments; and when obſerved with diligence, they all center in bleſſedneſs, and can we then chuſe but be diligent? The Commands of God (my beloved) are not grievous, neither ſhould we count them ſo; becauſe profitable and advantagious to all that diligently keep them.

The Lord ſeeks not Himſelf, but the good of his People in all his Commandments. He bids us ſow to the Spirit, not that He may reap any thing thereby, but that we, of the Spirit, may reap life everlaſting.

He requireth, that we ſhould be zealous of good works; but it's rather, that he may give us wages, than that he Himſelf ſhould get any thing by our working. He puts us (to be ſhort) in his vineyard, not to gather vintage for Him, but that we our ſelves may get the harveſt of eternal glory.

Oh then, mind it ſeriouſly I beſeech you, if God intend not his own, but our advantage in all His commands; Shall we not diligently obſerve them, and do them with all our might? What, Muſt the great God ſtoop below Himſelf, and have ſuch a ſtir with you, to do you good? Muſt He ſo beſeech you to be happy, and follow you with daily importunities, to make you diligent

gent about thoſe things, wherein your ſelves are moſt neerly concerned?

13. Conſider, *Things relating to God's glory, and your own ſalvation, are matters of everlaſting conſequence; and ſhould you not then be diligent in them, endeavouring to do them with all your might? Zeuxes* (that famous Limner) being demanded, Why he was ſo exact, diligent, and curious about his work? Anſwered, *Diu pingo, quia æternitati pingo:* I am long in painting, becauſe I paint for an eternity. And ſhould not we (my beloved) much more be diligent in matters of Religion, doing them with all our might, when we know them to be things of everlaſting conſequence? *Non tranſeunt opera noſtra, ſicut tranſire videntur, ſed velut æternitatis ſemina jaciuntur.* All our works, though they be acts of time, and ſo, ſhort in performance; yet they ſhall all have an eternal recompence. We all paint unto eternity; every one of our actions tends to an eternity of Joyes, or an eternity of Torments, as being all of them ſeeds of eternity; which, though they be ſown in this world, yet they ſhall ſpring up in the next.

My Brethren, we Preach, we Read, we Hear, we Pray, and all for Eternity. If theſe, and the like duties of Chriſtianity, be performed diligently by us, and with all our might, they make us everlaſtingly happy; but, if negligently, and in a ſlothful manner, they make us everlaſtingly miſerable, we are undone for ever. Think then of what eternal and everlaſting conſequence theſe things are, and then be negligent about them, if you can!

14. Con-

14. Conſider, *To be diligent in the wayes of God, endeavouring with all your might, to walk therein, is your greateſt Ornament. Labor ſplendore decoratur.* Activity in the duties of God's Worſhip doth ennoble a Chriſtian; it makes him reſemble God, who is a moſt pure act, and ſo becomes an enſign of His glory, a badge of honour to Him.

The Great Ones of the world think, it were to go below themſelves, ſhould they be zealous in Religion; for them to Pray, to hear the Word in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, and to lay out themſelves in the duties of God's Worſhip, with all their might, they judge it ſome kind of diſparagement; Religion, they think, may do well for men of a meaner rank; but for Nobles, and Gentlemen, it's too great a ſtain: But, had *David* ſuch thoughts of God's wayes, when he danced before the Ark with all his might; yea, when upon that very account he was reproached by his own Wife; Did he not count it his honour, and a glory to himſelf?

Settle it then, I beſeech you, upon your hearts, that, To be diligent in the wayes of God, endeavouring to ſerve him with all your might, is not matter of ſhame, but of glory; it argues no baſe, but a noble, heroick, Spirit. For, what, I beſeech you, can more adorn a man, than true Virtue, than to glorifie God, and be glorified by Him?

15. Conſider, *To be diligent in theſe things, endeavouring to do them with all your might, will be matter of ſingular comfort in a dying hour.* This will be a death-bed Cordial; and when all other comforts ſtand a-loof, this alone will ſtand by you,

to

to give you comfort. A man that hath been hard at work all the day, will ſleep quietly at night: So, Chriſtians, having been labouring hard in God's vineyard all your life, Oh, with what comfort may you lay down your heads at the night of Death, upon a pillow of duſt, in hope of a joyful Reſurrection!

Be Death as terrible as it will to all wicked and ſlothful Servants, yet you that have been diligent to improve your Lord's Talent, may entertain it with comfort. This is your day of working, but then is your day of rewarding; this is your ſeed-time, but then comes your harveſt. Though now you ſigh and mourn, yet then you ſhall ſing and rejoyce. Then you ſhall ſee the travel of your Souls, and be ſatisfied; then you ſhall not repent that you were diligent in things relating to God's glory, and your own ſalvation, ſtriving to do them with all your might. For then, remember that Death, which is as a Trap-door, to let the wicked down into Hell, you ſhall find it a Portal, a Gate, to let your Souls into Heaven.

As therefore you would ever have comfort in a dying hour, in the day that your riches, your friends, and all your worldly comforts ſhall be taken from you; Oh, now be diligent in the wayes of God, now labour for the meat that endures to eternal life, now work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. For, conſider it as men that have reaſon, you cannot avoid the ſtroke of Death; that fatal hour will ſhortly be upon you, ſet as leight by it now as you will; and, Oh, with what horrour will your Souls be filled,

filled, and what bloody agonies will you then be in, if now you trifle out your time, not endeavouring by the holineſs of your lives, to lay in conforts againſt the terrours of death!

16. Conſider, *The welfare of your immortal Souls, depends upon your diligence in the wayes of God.* In the Ship, Chriſtian, of thy religious endeavours, is embarqued a Jewel, more worth than ten thouſand worlds; and if, through negligence, thou ſuffer that to ſink, thy Soul muſt ſink, and be undone for ever.

My Brethren, If we can ſave our Souls, though we loſe the world, it's a gainful loſs: but, if we loſe our Souls, though we gain the whole world, yet our gains will undo us, *Mat.*16.26.

The Merchant that ventures All in one Ship, if the Ship be loſt, he is quite broken: Chriſtian, remember thou haſt but one Soul, and if that be gone, All is gone.

"God (ſaith *Chryſoſtome*) hath given thee "two eyes, if thou loſeſt one, thou haſt another: "but, God hath given thee but one Soul; and "if that miſcarry, thou art quite undone.

There is no loſs in all the world, to be compared with the loſs of an Immortal Soul; other loſſes may be made up again: If a man loſe his Health, he may recover it again; if he loſe his Eſtate, he may get it up again; Oh, but if he loſe his Soul, this is an eternal loſs; the Soul once loſt, is loſt for ever; this loſs can never be repaired, nor made up again.

And ſhall not this Conſideration quicken you to diligence in the wayes of God; ſhall it not fill your hand with opportunities, and put a ſpur

upon your endeavours, when a Jewel, ſo precious, is embarqued therein? For your Bodies, which muſt ſhortly crawl with worms, & moulder into duſt, you are exceſſively careful: And will you then have no care of your immortal Souls, of your Souls, that, according to your diligence, or negligence, in the ſervice of God here, muſt be happie or miſerable hereafter, to all eternity? Oh, Who would not rather ſpend, and be ſpent in the ſervice of God, than loſe his immortal Soul, and be miſerable in the loſs thereof, to all eternity!

17. Conſider, *How mightily Chriſt laid out Himſelf for us, and let that make us willing to ſpend, and be ſpent for Him.* The work of our Redemption, though the moſt difficult province in all the world, yet Chriſt went through with it, *Joh.* 17.4. So was Chriſt's heart ſet upon the work of our Redemption, that He ſuffered contradiction of ſinners, endured the croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame thereof, and brake through all difficulties that ſtood in the way, humbling Himſelf unto death for our ſakes.

Now, Did Chriſt thus work for us with all His might, and ſhall not we, by way of gratitude, be diligent in the work of Obedience to his Commandments, endeavouring to do it with all our might? Did He bleed for our Redemption, and ſhall not we ſweat in working out our own Salvation with fear and trembling? Did He ſuffer ſuch a bloody Agonie, to ſet open the gate into the kingdom of Heaven; and ſhall not we ſtrive even to an agonie, to enter in thereat? Did He, in a word, ſo willingly lay down His life for us;

and

and ſhall not we, with all our might, lay out our lives for Him, as willing to ſpend and be ſpent in His ſervice?

Oh, let us not ſay of any duty that Chriſt commands us, (though it be to pull out a right eye, to cut off a right hand, to forego our deareſt luſts and enjoyments for His ſake) this is a hard work, Who can do it! For, hath not Chriſt done harder work for us? If he call us to deny our ſelves, did not he firſt deny Himſelf, His eaſe, His glory, yea, His life for our ſakes?

18. Conſider, *You have yet time, and an opportunity of doing with all your might, the things relating to God's glory, and your own ſalvation.* This *Exhortation*, to the damned in hell, would be unſeaſonable; for the ſeaſon of Grace is over with them: But you (my beloved) through a miracle of condeſcending Love, have yet time to work, are yet within the poſſibility of Salvation, and have a fair opportunity wherein to make your ſelves everlaſtingly happie, if you will but improve it with all your might. Behold, now is is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation. Oh, therefore, no longer ſtand idle, but whilſt yet you have time, provide for eternity!

Now God commands, now the Spirit breathes, now Miniſters beſeech; yet you have time to work in, yet you have light to work by; Oh, therefore conſider, and know in this the day of your Viſitation, what concerns your everlaſting peace, that you may ſet about it in good earneſt!

Though (Chriſtians) the Gate of Heaven be

ſtrait, yet conſider, it ſtands open; and therefore ſee that you ſtrive to go in thereat. The date of your Day is not yet exſpired; work then whilſt you have the Day, for the Night comes when you cannot work. The Term-time of Grace is not yet over; now therefore plead with God for the lives of your immortal Souls. The King of Glory doth yet hold forth the golden Scepter of His Grace to you; now, therefore, lay hold upon it with all your might, that you may not die, but live for ever. You have yet (my Brethren) a fair gale for Heaven; Oh therefore, without delay, looſen anchor from ſin, and hoyſt up the ſails of your Souls while the Wind blows, if ever you deſire to arrive at the Port of Happineſs, to be landed ſafe at the ſhore of eternal Reſt. The Glaſs of your lives, in a word, is not yet run out; nor your Sun gone down in a cloud; but ſtill you have a comfortable Seed-time; Oh, therefore, defer no longer, but now ſow to the Spirit, if ever you would of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.

19. Conſider, *The great uncertainty of Goſpel-opportunities, and how ſoon the date of Mercy will be over with you.* The time of our life being ſo ſhort, to be ſure our day of grace cannot be long; and yet who knows, but the day of our life may out-date our day of grace? Goſpel-opportunities are very precious, but very uncertain; they will not alwaies laſt: and there is none can tell how ſoon they may end. The Sun knows the time of his going down; but the ſons of Men cannot tell the time when the Sun of their life ſhall ſet, and the day of grace end with them.

Now

Now thou haſt the light, but it is uncertain how long it will ſhine upon thee; now thou haſt the word of the Goſpel, but it is uncertain how long thou ſhalt hear that joyful ſound; now thou haſt a door of Mercy ſet before thee, but it is uncertain how long it ſhall ſtand open to thee, nor canſt thou tell how ſoon it may be ſhut againſt thee: Oh then, ſeeing the uncertainty of Goſpel-opportunities is ſo great, and that the date of Mercy will ſo ſoon be over, be diligent now in the wayes of God, and *whatever thy hand findeth to do therein, do it with all thy might.*

Oh ſinner, thou that art ſtill reſolved to go on in the careleſs neglect of God, and thy own Soul, me-thinks I hear thy Paſſing-Bell go, and that dolefully; thy golden Hour of grace will ſoon run out, and the Sun of thy life go down in a cloud: And ſhall not this awaken thee to diligence in the wayes of God? Haſt thou no tears to ſhed over a dying Soul, over a departing Goſpel, over thoſe precious ſeaſons of Grace wherein thy happineſs is bound up, conſidering, how quickly thou art like to loſe them!

20. Conſider, *Whether you be diligent or negligent; whether you lay forth your ſelves in the wayes of God, providing for eternity with all your might, or not; yet your time runneth on.* Time and Tide, we ſay, ſtayes no man's leiſure; you cannot ſtay the Chariot-wheel of Time, nor ſtop the Sun of your lives, in its courſe towards the Weſt of death; and ſhould not all this add wings to our endeavours, making us diligent in the wayes of God, that the Time of our life, out-run not the work of our life.

Our lives (my Brethren) unravel apace; like Oyl in the Lamp, which continually waſteth; and as the Hour-glaſs which ſtoppeth not till all be run out, ſuch is the life of every man; Who then can ſtand idle any longer, not labouring to improve his time which ſo ſwiftly flies, and will ſo ſoon be gone, do what we will!

When a man is in a Ship at Sea, he is ſtill paſſing on towards the Haven, whatſoever his employment be, whether ſleeping, or waking: So, you that are ſlothful in the wayes of God, thou that art negligent in the work of the Lord; thou that canſt ſleight the things that are of everlaſting conſequence, making leight of heaven and hell; conſider, the day of thy life is continually paſſing on towards that Haven, which will land thee upon the coaſts of Eternity. And is thy life indeed paſſing on, and thy glaſs continually running; Oh then, do not you ſtand idle! The night comes on us (you know) unavoidably, whether our work be done or no: So, there is a night of Death coming upon thee, whether the work of thy life be done, or undone!

21. Conſider, *The time is at hand, when you will wiſh you had been diligent in the ſervice of God, endeavouring to do it with all your might.* Whilſt Judgement, Death, and Hell, are at a diſtance, it's eaſie to make leight of them; and few there are, that ſo improve their time, to make proviſion againſt them: I, but when once death ſhall ſeize upon you, judgement over-take you, and your poor Souls come at length to be chained up by the almighty hand of God, in the priſon of hell, amongſt the damned ſpirits, then you will

ſee

ſee what it is to neglect your time, to ſtand idle all the day in God's vineyard, and to trifle in matters of everlaſting conſequence! Oh, how willingly would you then ſpend, and be ſpent in the work of the Lord, were there but the leaſt ground of hope remaining for you! Yea, how gladly would you then be ſtrict, preciſe, and diligent in the wayes of God, ſerving him with all your might for ten thouſand years together, might you but purchaſe to your ſelves thereby one moment's releaſe from thoſe infernal flames, wherein you muſt be for ever tormented, but never conſumed! Believe it (Sirs) you will not alwayes be able to jeaſt at heaven, and hell, nor to ſlight things relating to God's glory, and your own ſalvation, as now you do. To be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of God, and the glory of his Power, to dwell with everlaſting burnings, and to lie as a fire-brand in hell, to all eternity; no heart can poſſibly meditate the terrour of ſuch a doom: Oh, but that which will put an accent upon all this miſery, and fill the poor Soul, that muſt for ever lie under it, with everlaſting, furious, heart-rending reflections upon his own madneſs will be this, That he had ſometime an opportunity to eſcape all this; but through negligence, would not improve it, would not give diligence to eſcape the vengeance of eternal fire!

22. Conſider, *What a tranſcendently great, and glorious reward the Lord will beſtow upon all that are diligent in things that relate to His glory, and their own ſalvation, endeavouring to do them with all their might.* Say the world what they will of Re-

ligion, and the wayes of God; yet if we be diligent therein, we ſhall find Him a plentiful rewarder of all our labours, *Heb.*11.6. When men are diligent in the duties of God's Worſhip, endeavouring to do them with all their might, they have Heaven and Earth entailed upon them: this gives them much in poſſeſſion, the promiſe of the life that now is; but infinitely more in reverſion, the promiſe of the life that is to come, 1 *Tim.*4.8. Oh then, What will be able to quicken you to diligence in the wayes of God, provoking you to ſerve the Lord with all your might; if not, the Conſideration of that Crown, that Kingdom, that eternal weight of Glory that abides you in another world? Shall the men of the world riſe early, go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulneſs; and all this for ſuch things as periſh in the uſing, and will not you do as much for a Kingdom that can never be moved?

Haſt thou (Chriſtian) ſuch a crown, and yet run no faſter; ſuch a triumph, and yet fight the battels of the Lord with no more activity; ſuch a Lord, and yet labour ſo ſlothfully, when thy ſervice is attended with ſuch fulneſs of Reward?

Oh, never think you can do enough for that God, who will ſhortly ſet you aſhore on the Land of Promiſe: But as you ever deſire to be happie, give diligence now to be holy; as ever you would have a Manſion of Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, ſee now, that you ſerve the Lord with all your might, ſtriving hard to enter in at the ſtrait Gate!

To be preſent with the Lord, and that for ever,

ver, to behold the light of his countenance, and that ſhining upon us in its full ſtrength, what greater joy, and happineſs can our hearts deſire? If one days communion with God on Earth, be better then a thouſand elſe where; what ſhall we then think of immediate communion with God in Heaven, not for a Day that is ſoon over, but for thouſands and millions of Years, for a long and bleſſed Eternity, that will never be over?

23. Conſider, *If now you be diligent in things relating to Gods glory, and your own Salvation, doing them with all your might, not only ſhall you be rewarded; but, the more diligent you are, the greater ſhall be your reward in Heaven.* Every ſoul that is diligent in the ways of God, ſhall have a Kingdom, but the more any man lays out himſelf for God, the higher ſhall be his place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

He that hath done more, ſhall receive more; He that ſows plentifully the Seeds of Grace, ſhall reap a more plentiful crop of Glory, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6.

That therefore, you may act more diligently in the ways of God, conſider this; the more work you do, the more glory you ſhall have; and the more you lay out your ſelves for God here, the greater reward will God lay up for you in Heaven!

24. Conſider this for your incouragement, *That you have but a while to work, and then comes your reward.* As Doctor *Taylor*, when going to the ſtake, ſaid; *I have but two ſtiles to go over, and then I ſhall be at my Father's Houſe*: So, you that are diligent in the ways of God, you have but

two

two ſtiles to go over, a few difficulties to break through, and then you will be at your Father's Houſe, where you ſhall take poſſeſſion of Eternal manſions of Glory. The time of your lives Chriſtians, being ſo ſhort, certain it is, that the work of your life cannot be long; though therefore you ſhould find it tedious, yet do it with all your might, reſolving to go through with it, and before you be well aware, you will be amongſt *the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, and have the Crown of glory ſet upon your head, *Rev.* 22.12.

Oh then! be not weary in well doing, and your reward is ſure. Do but run with patience, and you win the Crown. Do but fight a while, and the Victory, the Triumph is yours. Do but hold out working diligently in Gods Vineyard the whole day of your life, and you are ſure to receive ~~the peny of~~ Eternal glory, at the evening of ~~your death~~.

25. Conſider, *What everlaſtingly dreadful and unconceivable miſery, abides thoſe in the world to come, who are ſlothful in this, not ſtriving to ſerve the Lord with all their might.* The pains of duty, are nothing to the torments that follow the neglect of duty: And to be ſure, you that cannot away with working for God, ſhall have your part in ſuffering the wrath of God. The ſlothful ſervant that improved not his Talent, *was caſt into utter darkneſs*: Thoſe that improve not their time, their ſtrength, and all for God, ſhall undoubtedly be caſt out at length into utter darkneſs, *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*, Mat. 25. 30.

Oh then, conſider theſe things all you that have

have hitherto been negligent in the work of the Lord. Is it not better for us to do, than ſuffer his will! You that cry out, you cannot away with ſo much ſtrictneſs, and diligence; Do you think you can ſuffer more eaſily the revenge of Eternal fire? Though the ways of God be tedious to fleſh and blood, yet is it not better that the fleſh ſhould be croſſed a while, than tormented for ever? Is it not better that we ſhould be diligent in things relating to God glory, and our own Salvation, ſtriving to do them with all our might, than that, through negligence, we ſhould fall ſhort of the glory of God, and be damned for ever? Is it not, in a word, better that we ſhould all of us go ſweating to Heaven, than ſleeping to Hell.

Be the duties of chriſtianity, never ſo tedious and difficult, yet to be ſure it's ten Thouſand times better to diſcharge them with all our might, than that, neglecting them, you ſhould for ever be under Gods wrath, and be damned eternally!

26. And laſtly, Conſider, *If you loſe your opportunity, not ſerving the Lord with all your might, you loſe it for ever.* Though men will not ſet bounds to their ſin, yet God hath ſet bounds to his patience; There is a time when the Sun of Gods patience will ſet; and, being once ſet, it will never return any degrees backward. Thoſe five fooliſh Virgins witneſs this, who unprovidedly ſlept till the Bridegroom came, and were therefore ſhut ont from the wedding.

They, who neglected gathering Manna in the

ſix days, might ſeek it on the ſeventh, but all in vain: So, they who refuſe to gather the Manna of Grace in this life, ſhall ſeek it with tears in the next, but all in vain. The Sun ſets, and riſeth again; but if the day of Grace, and the day of thy life be once ended, it can never be recalled.

Non relinquitur hoſtia pro peccatore, in peccatis mortuo, nec deſcendit in inferos ſanguis ſuper terram effuſus God will never ſend his Prophets to the Grave, nor erect a Pulpit in Hell, for the Preaching of Repentance and Mercy, to thoſe that are dead in their ſins. Oh then, conſider this, and be ſlothful no more, but lay out your ſelves for Eternity, with all your might. Now, my Brethren, is the day of Salvation; let go this preſent day without improvement, and, for ought you know, you ſhall never have another. However, they who, in the day of Grace, ſtop their ears at God, calling them to Repentance, will find God ſtop his ears at them, begging for Mercy. They who refuſe the profers of Grace in this Life, may hereafter ſeek for entrance, but ſhall not be admitted.

Oh therefore, make Religion your buſineſs, and be not ſlothful therein, but, *fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord*, with all your might!

Chriſtians, there is no work in the Grave whither you are all haſtning; there you ſhall never have the leaſt opportunity, though you would give ten thouſand worlds for it; Whatever therefore you have to do for God and your own ſouls, do it with all your heart, with all your ſtrength,

ſtrength, and with all your might. *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom, in the Grave, whither we are all of us going*: The Grave is a place of reſting from our works, and not of working for reſt, and Eternal glory.

FINIS.

SERMON IV.

Iſa. 27. 15.

For thus ſaith the High and Lofty One, that Inhabiteth eternity, whoſe Name is holy, I dwell in the High and Holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite Ones.

GOd, who is rich in Mercy, abundant in Goodneſs, and Truth, doth not *afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*: But if at any time through their incorrigibleneſs, and the multiplicity of their ſins, they provoke the Lord to come againſt them with a coun-

a countenance composed to severity, yet still he hath thoughts of Mercy towards returning Prodigals.

Hence it is that we may see such an excellent Temperament of Justice and Mercy in all Gods dispensations towards the children of Men; It being the usual way of our God to allay the terrours of *Sinai*, with the comforts of *Sion*, and sweeten his menaces of Judgment, with promises of Mercy.

Semblably hereunto, is the dealing of our God with the Idolatrous *Jews*, in this Chapter; For rebellion against himself, he had been shaking his Iron-rod over such as were obstinate; but yet, he holds out the golden Scepter of his Grace to all that should humble themselves under his mighty Hand. And as in the former part of the Chapter, he casteth down by legal threatnings, all impenitent and proud hearted Apostates; So, in the latter part, he indeavours to raise up with Evangelical promises all truly humble, and sincere converts, telling them, as in the words of my Text, that though he were *the high and lofty One inhabiting Eternity, whose Name was holy*: Yet, he would so far condescend and humble himself, as to *dwell with them that should be found of an humble and contrite Spirit.*

And thus I have briefly brought you to the words of my Text, wherein you may observe these two *Particulars.*

1. An Inhabitant described, *The high and lofty One*

2. His

2. His Habitation ſpecified, *that inhabiteth Eternity.*

1. For the Inhabitant deſcribed, *The high and lofty One.*

'Tis a *Periphraſis* of the Moſt High God, ſetting forth his tranſcendently ſurpaſſing Glory, Greatneſs, and Excellency above all creatures, which, in compariſon of him, are no more than the *drop of a Bucket, or the ſmall duſt of a Ballance, even lighter than Vanity, and Nothing it ſelf,* Iſa.

2. For his Habitation ſpecified, *that inhabiteth Eternity.*

'Tis a phraſe implying Gods Eternal Being, and Exiſting; and that the Lord is for ever as it were fixed in Eternity, as in his proper Habitation, out of which he can never be ejected, but there ſpends his days in an endleſs duration of perfect happineſs, without all ſucceſſion of days.

Doct. *The God whom we worſhip, is an Eternal God.* There is, by ſome, a diſtinction made between Eternity, and Eviternity, and Time; Neither is this diſtinction without a difference. For, ſay they, Time is the portion and lot of man who hath a beginning, and ſhall have an end; Eviternity is the meaſure of Angels, and the ſouls of men, which though they had a beginning, yet ſhall never have an end; But, Eternity is proper to God alone, who as he never had a beginning, ſo he ſhall never have an end.

Many of Gods Attributes are communicable to his creatures, not Numerically, and in their proper forms, but improperly, and in ſome Analogical effects: But now, this Glorious Attribute of Gods Eternity, it is proper for him alone, neither

ther can it possibly be attributed to any creature. For all creatures how excellent soever, had a beginning, all but some few shall at length have a dissolution: But now, the God whom we worship, both *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*, is truly Eternal, having neither *beginning of Dayes, nor end of Life*, Psal. 102. 26, 27.

If you look never so far back, you shall never find where Gods being begun; and if you look never so far forward, inquiring with all curiosity into the time to come, yet you shall never find any likelihood of his ending.

God is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last: his duration is not only, as some creatures, which shall have an Eternity forward; but also, as no creature can possibly have, an Eternity backward: And yet, in a strict sense, there is neither forwards nor backwards, neither past nor to come, in Gods Eternity, but his Beeing consists in one infinite Moment, in one Eternal Now!

Gods essence extends it self infinitely beyond the time of the world's Creation, yea, and it extends it self infinitely forward to, beyond the time of the worlds dissolution: He is the first without beginning, and he is the last without all shadow of ending, *Psal.* 90. 2.

Many other Scriptures might be alledged, for the proof of the *Doctrine*, but waving them, take these following Demonstrations of it.

1. *The God whom we worship is an uncreated Beeing, and therefore Eternal.* Gods Self-existency is a clear demonstration of his Eternal Beeing, and God-head: For, if he were made of none, and

and yet hath a Being, he muſt then of neceſſity have been for ever, and eternally exiſting.

God having his Being derivatively from nothing without himſelf, it doth clearly evince that he is from everlaſting to everlaſting, an indeficient Fountain of Being to himſelf, without either beginning of days, or end of life.

Many indeed there are, who queſtion, Whether a thing may not have a Being communicated to it by Creation, and yet be Eternal: But the Eternity of that which hath a Being, and yet never received it from any other by creation, will no man queſtion. That which is Self-exiſting, muſt needs be Eternally-exiſting, both forward, and backward.

2. *The God whom we worſhip, is abſolutely the beſt and moſt tranſcendently Excellent of all Beings, and therefore Eternal*: For, *Who knows not that that which is Eternal (if Good) is infinitly better than that which is not at all; or, at the beſt, but Temporal, and for a Seaſon?*

'Tis a received Maxim, which never yet met with oppoſition from any man, that, *Æterna momentaneis præferenda ſunt*, Things of an Eternal, and Infinite, are far more Excellent, then things of a finite and momentany duration: Our God therefore, being *Optimus*, *Maximus*, the Beſt, and Higheſt of Beings, an immenſe Ocean of all Goodneſs, and One that far exceedeth the whole Creation, in all Divine excellencies, as doth the Sun ſhining in its full ſtrength, the light of the ſmalleſt ſpark, is undoubtedly Eternal, without either beginning of Days, or end of Life.

3. *The God whom we worſhip, is the only Creator, that gave being by the word of his Power, unto all Things, Time it ſelf not excepted; which doth clearly evince ehim to be truly Eternal.*

For he that made all things, muſt of neceſſity have a Being before all things that he made, he muſt needs have a Being before Time it ſelf, which is only his creature; and whatever was before Time, is truly Eternal.

He that made all things in the beginning, muſt needs Himſelf be without beginning, and by conſequence Eternally exiſting.

4. *The God whom we worſhip, is the Authour of Eternal Life, to thoſe that have it; he hath provided an Eternal weight of Glory, and everlaſting Felicity for all that love him, and therefore muſt needs be Eternal him ſelf.*

For, *Nihil dat quod non habet*, Whatſoever can give Eternity of happineſs, it muſt undoubtedly not only in it ſelf be happy, but Eternally happy, having an Eternal Being and exiſtency, without either beginning of days, or end of Life.

But leaving the *Confirmation*, as a thing leſs needful in ſo clear a truth, come we to the *Improvement* of the Doctrine, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, By way of *Information*; *This ſheweth us the infinite Felicity, and unconceivable Bleſſedneſs of our God.* Eternity is proper to him, and that is the whole and perfect poſſeſſion of an endleſs life together. Time neither bringeth, nor carrieth away any happineſs from the God whom we worſhip, but he hath all his happineſs in Eternity, not one part of his happineſs after another; but all together.

gether. For, every moment of Eternity is filled with all the bleſſedneſs of Eternity: So that, God doth not receive his happineſs like us, by the fluxes and refluxes of time ſucceſſively, but remaines unconceivably happy, and everlaſtingly bleſſed in every moment of Eternity.

This made *Plutarch*, that excellent Philoſopher, as I find him quoted by my Authour, after he had delivered many excellent things concerning Gods Eternal immutability, conclude with this moſt Emphatical *Epiphonema*, εἷς ὤν, ἐν νῦν τὸ ἀεὶ πεπλήρωκε, which we may render thus, God being but One, doth in one inſtant of Eternity, fully enjoy the whole happineſs of that endleſs duration.

No mortal man doth together in one moment poſſeſs all thoſe thoughts, affections, joys, and pleaſures, which by ſucceſſion in a long tract of Time he hath. But, God doth at once, and together, poſſeſs all his thoughts and decrees together, with all fulneſs of joy every moment, from Eternity, to all Eternity!

Secondly, By way of *Information*; *This may ſhew us the Infinite diſtance that is betwixt all Creatures, how glorious and excellent ſoever, and the God whom we worſhip.*

The Lord is, What he is, in one Infinite moment of Beeing: but now, the moſt glorious Angel, as well as the pooreſt Wòrm hath his beeing conſiſting in a perpetual flux, from one moment to another.

God gave beginning to all things, but was himſelf without a beginning; is the end for which all things were made, but remaines him-

ſelf without end; both which in conjunction with each other, do lift him up as far above all Creatures, as the Sun in the Firmament, is exalted above a Mole-hill.

For, every creature we muſt know, is limited by circumſtance of Time, and though there be ſome creatures, that through Divine ordination, ſhall never have an end, yet, their whole eſſence being derivatively from God by creation, it implies a contradiction, to ſay, that any of them had no beginning.

The creature, may indeed have its beeing perpetuated to Eternity, but could not poſſibly have its beeing produced from Eternity; it being the only property of the God whom we worſhip, to have his beeing *from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, without all variableneſs and ſhadow of turning*, Pſal. 90. 2. *Jam.* 1. 17.

The Eternity of our God requires, that it be not ſo with him, as with his creatures; their beeing is meaſured out by Time, but God is a beeing above Time, not meaſured by Time, but is fixed in Eternity; his eſſence had no beginning, can have no end, and his days are without ſucceſſion of days.

Thirdly, By way of *Information*; *This may give us to ſee a reaſon, why God takes ſuch leiſure to bring about his deſignes in the world.* He need not precipitate his work, but may take what time he will, to compleat it in, and make as many opportunities as he pleaſeth of executing judgment for his people, upon all the ungodly. The people of God ſhould not therefore be too much dejected with the proſperity of ſuch as afflict them; though

for the preſent, we be counted as ſheep for the ſlaughter, and can hear nothing but men breathing out Threatnings, and Impriſonment; yet, little cauſe have the enemies of God's people to rejoyce againſt them, or to inſult over them; For, *There is a Year of vengeance, and of recompences for the controverſies of* Sion, Iſa. 34. 8. Though Believers may have loſt their opportunity of deliverance, yet the God of believers, is not tied to opportunities, he can make them. There are more opportunities of pleading the cauſe of Gods people, and executing judgment for them, upon their implacable enemies, in one Eternity, than all men can reckon up.

Fourthly, and laſtly; By way of *Information*; *This may alſo let us ſee the folly of all ſuch as take encouragement from Gods patience, to promiſe themſelves impunity in a courſe of ſin.* God often endures, with much long ſuffering, Veſſels of wrath; hereupon they go on, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt, never labouring to fly from the wrath to come.

When the Lord keeps ſilence in Heaven, and doth not preſently thunder down vengeance upon the heads of ſinners, they are ready to dream of a perpetual happineſs, and think they ſhall do as well as the preciſeſt of them all.

Eccleſ. 8 11. *Becauſe vengeance againſt an evil worker, is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the heart of the ſons of Men, is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Thus doth mans venemous nature, ſuck poyſon out of ſo ſweet an Attribute as Gods patience, and extracts preſumptions of ſinning out of his connivence at ſinners; As if, becauſe the long

ſuffering of the Lord were laſting, it would be everlaſting!

See now, I beſeech you, the folly, from Gods Eternity, of ſuch ungodly concluſions! Is there no difference between Long ſuffering, and Eternal ſuffering? Becauſe, God hath forborn to cut you off in the very actings of your ſins, will you thence conclude, that he hath no further opportunity to inflict vengeance upon you, for your ſins? You remember not, ſurely, that God is Eternal, otherwiſe you would break off your ſins by repentance, endeavouring in time to flie from the wrath to come.

Well, but know that the longeſt ſummers day of Gods patience will have an end, and at length go down in an endleſs night of unappeaſed fury! You, that are impenitent ſinners, are every day haſtning to the periods of Gods reprieves; and though for the preſent, the Lord ſeem not to regard what you do, yet, this is not worth the ſpeaking of to Him, who hath an Eternity wherein to reckon with you, who cannot want time to pour out his judgments, and empty the Vials of his wrath upon you, but is able to turn the abuſed times of his Patience, Mercy, and Long-ſuffering, into an Eternity of wrath, and unmixed fury.

Preſume then no longer of mercy in a way of ſin from Gods lengthened-out patience towards you; For at laſt it will undoubtedly end in eaſeleſs, endleſs, and remedileſs miſery.

Oh you that now make a mock at ſin, ſcoffing at Gods delays, and pleaſing your ſelves with this, that threatned-folks live long; know this, you have

have a God to deal with, that inhabiteth Eternity, and you will find time enough to lie under his Eternal wrath.

Secondly, By way of *Reprehenſion*, this may ſpeak terrour to, and ſharply reprove, ſeveral ſorts of perſons. As,

1. *This ſharply reproves, and may be a word of terrour to all worldly men, who do wholly reſt in the creature, making that their happineſs.* To neglect the God of Heaven, who in regard of his Eternal beeing and exiſtency, might be an everlaſting portion, and only to pitch upon ſuch things for our happineſs, as do periſh in the uſing, What prodigious folly is it, and how worthy of reproof! Who that is wiſe, would thus prefer Peebles before this Pearl of great price, things that periſh in the uſing before an intereſt in that which ſhall indure for ever, a temporal enjoyment, before an everlaſting portion? Oh brutiſh ſtupidity of ſinning duſt and aſhes, that never conſider what will become of them dying, when ſtanding at Gods Tribunal, when all friends, and worldly comforts ſhall take their leave of them, and ſuffer their immortal ſouls to ſink down in everlaſting confuſion!

Go to then, thou that art a worm, and no man, ſpending the ſmall ſpan of thy tranſitory life, in accumulating riches, in ſeeking great things for thy ſelf, and graſping in much of the world, will thy wealth avail thee in the day of God's wrath? Think ſeriouſly of it, and let conſcience anſwer, as in the ſight of God, with whom it is impoſſible to diſſemble; Will thy profits, and honours, thy bags of gold, and thy neareſt relati-

ons, when the bitter pangs and throbs of death ſhall come upon thee, be able to comfort thy poor ſoul, now ready to bid adiew to a ſinful body, and to enter, without all hopes of return, upon a Condition of endleſs, intolerable, and remedileſs torments?

Believe it, my Brethren, it is not Temporal, but Eternal comforts that can make you truly happy, & rejoyce your ſouls in a *dying hour*! And are your riches everlaſting riches? Your honours, unperiſhable honours? Your worldly friends, never dying friends? And the life that you now live, is it an abiding life, a life that never runs into the Grave, a life whoſe flower ſhall never be cropt by the hand of death? Can all theſe, or any of theſe your comforts, extend themſelves to Eternity? Is there not, alas, a moth in thy garment, a ſtain in thy beauty, a blaſt upon thy honour, a conſumption in thy ſtrength, a canker in thy gold, and mortality in all thy relations; and muſt you not bid an everlaſting farwel to them all in a dying hour?

We then that have an Eternity lying before us, being aſhamed that we have ſo long fed upon the duſt of dying creatures, which like *Pageants*, whilſt they pleaſe us, paſs away from us in a moment; let us now ſee the vanity of them, labouring hence forward for an intereſt in God, who can never paſs away, but will be an everlaſting portion! *Pſal.* 73. 26.

For why ſhould we be taken ſo much with worldly injoyments, that muſt ſhortly be taken out of the world; or dote upon a flower ſo much which a day may wither, minding the world that

now

now is, ſo much as if it would never have an ending; and the world to come ſo little, as if it would never have a beginning?

2. *This ſharply reproves, and may juſtly fill the the heart of every ungodly, prophane, and impenitent perſon amongſt us, with fear and trembling.* Thou that art an ungodly perſon, committing all manner of Iniquity with greedineſs, and living in ſin without remorſe; thy lying, thy ſcoffing at the People of God, thy Sabbath-prophanations, thy Adulteries, thy Drunkenneſs, thy horrid Oaths, and many bloody Execrations; all theſe are committed againſt an eternal God, and ſhall therefore be puniſhed with an eternal puniſhment! 'Tis matter of comfort to the People of God that they have an Advocate with the Father, who is able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by Him, ſeeing He *ever liveth* to make interceſſion for them: I, but it may juſtly be matter of terrour, and conſternation of ſpirit to all the enemies of God, that they muſt one day have to do with a God, who is able to deſtroy to the utmoſt, all that depart from him by their ungodly practiſes, ſeeing he *ever lives* to pour out his Judgments, and to empty the Vials of his wrath upon them!

Oh, the bottomleſs Gulf of Eternity! Who can ſpeak of it without a *Soleciſm*, or think thereof without an *Extaſie*! And, who but a mad-man, would buy an hour's eaſe, for eternal torments; the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, for the torments of hell, that muſt be for ever! And yet, thus it is with all you that refuſe to break off your ſins by Repentance, that will

will not yet forgo your ſwearing, your drunkenneſs, your ungodly ſocieties, your whoredoms, and the like abominable impieties, for which you have, in the Name of an everlaſtingly dreadful God, been ſo often (out of love to your poor Souls) with all tenderneſs reproved! You ſay in effect, Give us the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, though hereafter we be damned eternally; let the fleſh be pleaſed a while, though both ſoul and body be hereafter tormented for it, in the *lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone for ever!* Rev. 21. 8.

But poor fooliſh ſinners, though you can thus make leight of hell, and the torments of everlaſting burnings now at a diſtance; yet you will ſhortly be in another mind, and have other thoughts of them, than now you have! And ſure our own Experience, for the preſent, might convince us of this; Who knows not that our fleſh will grudge at the pricking of a Pin, and be ready to ſhrink at the burning of a ſmall Candle; What will it then do, think you, when it ſhall be pierced through with the invenomed Arrows of God's wrath, and come to dwell with everlaſting burnings?

And yet this is thy portion, Man or Woman, whoever thou be, that now refuſeſt to hear the voice of God, calling thee to break off thy ſins by Repentance; He, whom now thou diſhonoureſt, is an eternal God, and therefore thy puniſhment muſt be an eternal puniſhment; as Heaven is an eternal Palace for the reward of the godly, ſo Hell is an everlaſting Priſon, wherein to torment the wicked; and ſo long as God dwells in Heaven,

Heaven, thou art like to lye under his wrath, and be ſhut up as a firebrand in Hell to all eternity!

Why is it then, that theſe things do not imbitter your ſweet morſels of ſin, and make you tremble! My Brethren, did I come with a meſſage of Death from an offended Soveraign, who, being but a mortal Man, can deſtroy no more than the body; I doubt it not, but the moſt ſtout and hardy ſinner amongſt you, would quickly tremble: Well, but I am ſent with a meſſage of Death, of eternal death, and everlaſting burnings in Hell, from the Soveraign Majeſty of all the World, to every ungodly perſon amongſt you; and, ſhall the wrath of a mortal Man make you tremble, and not the wrath of an Eternal God, who is able to deſtroy both Body, and Soul, for ever?

Well, believe it, ſinners, and the God of Heaven give you hearts to conſider it; for, I deſire not to ſee the day of your Calamity (the Lord knows) but believe it, I ſay, the time is at hand, when you will eaſily diſcern a difference between the frowns of a mortal Man, and the wrath of an Eternal God; betwixt the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, and thoſe everlaſting burnings in Hell, that muſt follow after!

Oh, Brethren, What a great change will there ſhortly be upon you, and what thoughts will you have of your ſweeteſt morſels of ſin in the world to come, when, for every drop of honey, you ſhall have a ſea of gall; and for every moment of carnal pleaſure, an eternity of helliſh torments!

Oh,

Oh, think now, how lamentable and ſad it is to be ſhut up in chains of everlaſting darkneſs, to be ſeparated from the Lord for ever, to be with the Devils and damned for ever, and, to dwell with everlaſting burnings. We think a Prayer long, a Sermon long, a Sabbath long: but, what thoughts will you have of Hell, and of a long eternity of miſery, in the infernal Priſon! Here, if in the Night we cannot ſleep, we count the hours, and every minute ſeems a month for tediouſneſs, Oh, but what will you do, when, for ſinning againſt an Eternal God, you muſt be tormented night and day for ever; what confuſion will there be on your faces, to ſee your ſelves caſt out into utter darkneſs, and to be commanded to *Depart* (as thoſe that are accurſed) *into eternal fire*, whilſt others are received to eternal happineſs; Can you dwell, do you think, with everlaſting burnings? To counter-ballance therefore, the violence of every temptation to ſin, think often of the eternal deſtruction in Hell that muſt follow after; and conſider, that if ſtill thou go on to ſin againſt an Eternal God, thou muſt ſhortly ſuffer an eternal miſery, an eternal puniſhment! For, the pains of ſin, are not like the pleaſures of ſin; the pleaſures of ſin are ſuddenly abortive, but the pains of ſin, which follow after, will be eternally tormenting!

Thirdly, By way of *Exhortation: If the God whom we worſhip, be an eternal God, then let all ſuch as have hitherto been eſtranged from Him, now labour above all things, to get an Intereſt in Him, that he may be our God, that he may be the ſtrength of our heart, and our portion for ever.* For otherwiſe, what

what are we the better for this glorious Attribute; though the Mercy of God endureth for ever; though in the Lord *Jehovah* there be everlaſting ſtrength, though his Wiſdom, his Goodneſs, and all his other glorious Attributes be Eternal like Himſelf; yet, if ſtill we be Aliens from Him, may we not juſtly ſay, as *Haman* in another caſe, That all this avails us nothing? *Tolle meum, tolle Deum.* If you take away my intereſt in God, my condition muſt needs be as miſerable as if there were no God at all to relieve a diſtreſſed Soul! For the higheſt pinnacle of Man's happineſs, is an intereſt in God; in the total privation of, and ſeparation from whom, lies the greateſt Emphaſis of Man's eternal miſery; there being no famine like the want of this bread, no darkneſs like the want of this Sun, no ſtorm like the want of this calm; neither is eternal death it ſelf, and burnings in hell for ever, worthy to be compared with the frowns and heavie diſpleaſure of this God, who lives for ever!

Oh therefore, be as loth now to live without an Intereſt in this Eternal Majeſty, as you will be loth hereafter to be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from His preſence, and from the glory of his Power!

1. Conſider, *The main thing whereupon every man ought to ſpend his thoughts, is Eternity; and there is no other way to make proviſion againſt it, but by getting an Intereſt here, in this Eternal God?* We live in a buſie world, and every man is driving on ſome deſign or other, with all his might; but, that which is the One thing neceſſary, that which we ought to make our τὸ ἔργον, and the work

work of our lives, is, to provide for Eternity, and how can we do it better than by making ſure our Intereſt in that God, who is Eternal?

Some there are, whom I have read of, that call man the *Horizon* of Time and Eternity, and not unfitly; for, in reſpect of his Body, he is Mortal; but, in reſpect of his Soul, he is Immortal; his body, after a time, ſhall be diſſolved and moulder away into duſt; but in reſpect of his Soul, he partakes of Eternity: Though, it's true, even the Body it ſelf ſhall, after a while, be raiſed up either to honour, or diſhonour; yet this ſuppoſes death and mortality: but now the Soul never dies, that lives for ever. So then, as our better part is eternal, and lives for ever, why ſhould not our thoughts likewiſe be chiefly fixed upon Eternity, and how to make proviſion for our Immortal Souls?

Thou art a brute, and no man, that canſt once imagine, that the Eternal Majeſty of Heaven made thee for no higher an end, than only to accommodate thy body, and to provide for that, not without the neglect of thy Soul, which muſt live for ever.

Why then, will you buſie your ſelves about unneceſſary things? When once will you ſpend your ſtrength about things of an everaſting concernment?

As *Jacob* ſaid to *Laban*, *Thou knowſt how I have ſerved thee; and now, When ſhall I provide for my own houſe alſo?* So let me ſay to many of you, You know how you have ſerved the world, what drudges you have been to your own bodies, and what pains you have been at, for thoſe things that

are

are calculated only for the Meridian of Time; and when now will you provide for your Immortal Souls, for Eternity alſo; or how can you do it better, than by getting an Intereſt in this Eternal God?

2. Conſider, *The ſhortneſs of your own lives, and let this provoke you to ſeek for an Intereſt in this God, who is truly Eternal, without either beginning of dayes, or end of life.* Alas (my Brethren) what is our Life, but a Flower, that ſoon withereth; a Poſt, that ſwiftly flies; a Bubble, that quickly vaniſheth; and ſhall not the ſhortneſs of life Temporal, make you labour for an Intereſt in that God who is truly Eternal, that when ſtrength fails, and fleſh fails, and life fails, yet God may never fail you, but comfort your Souls againſt this fading moment, with his own enduring Eternity.

Oh, What wilt thou do, when ſome mortal diſtemper ſhall overtake thee, when the pangs and throbs of an approaching Death are upon thee, thy Friends weeping, thy Children crying, and thy Soul now ready to leave thy body, and to be ingulfed in the boundleſs ocean of Eternity! Indeed, hadſt thou an Intereſt in this Eternal God, thou hadſt no great cauſe to be ſtartled at ſuch an hour; his Eternity would be a good Cordial againſt the thoughts of thy own mortality; Oh, but how bitter and dreadful will this be, to think, Now the glaſs of my life is run out; now the time of death is at hand; now the Sun of my life is going down in a cloud, for ought I know, never to riſe again; now I muſt preſently enter upon an Eternal condition, and yet,

yet, whether the Eternal God will be a merciful Father, or an ireful Judge to me; an everlasting Friend, or an everlasting Foe; I know not!

3. Consider, *The great uncertainty of those opportunities that God hath given you, wherein to get an Interest in Himself, and to make provision against Eternity.* Life it self is uncertain; but the opportunities of laying hold upon Eternal life, of getting an Interest in this Eternal Majesty, are far more uncertain!

There is a time when the Lord may be found, and then he should be sought; a time when the Lord is near, and then he should be called upon: but, let slip thy opportunity once, and it may be it's lost for ever.

As those that went not out to gather *Manna* on the six dayes of the Week, could not have it on the Sabbath; and, as those that did not step into the Pool while the Angel descended, could by no means have the benefit afterwards: So, if thou take not thy opportunity, to get an Interest in this eternal God now, it may never come again; this heavenly *Manna* may be taken from thee, the Angel may no more descend in the waters of the Sanctuary, and then thou art undone for ever; then farewel God, and farewel Christ, and farewel all hopes of eternal Life, for ever!

You see then (my Brethren) how exceeding dangerous it is, to adjourn in matters of this nature; how dangerous to let slip our opportunities of getting Interest in God: Oh, why should not that with all speed be gone about, which, if not once done, you are for ever undone!

Time

Time paſt (my Brethren) is gone; Time to come, may find us gone: Take therefore, the preſent opportunity to get an Intereſt in this eternal God, which ſhall never paſs away, but will be an everlaſting portion!

4. Conſider, *There is nothing that can make you truly happy, but only an Intereſt in this Eternal Majeſty!* Though a man had the greateſt confluence of all creature-enjoyments, had he the riches of a *Cræſus*, the dainties of a *Dives*, the pleaſures of an *Epicure*; yet, all this would not add one whit to the ſtature of his happineſs: For, ſuch riches, are not Eternal riches; ſuch dainties, will not ſpread a man's Table in the world to come; ſuch pleaſures are not unperiſhable pleaſures; there is ſtill wanting, in the choiſeſt of all theſe, the very life, and accompliſhment of true happineſs, and that is aſſurance of perpetuity.

There is, indeed, an innate appetite in every man after happineſs; and, a deſire to that which may make him bleſſed: But, ſooner ſhall men *gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thiſtles*, than find happineſs in their worldly-enjoyments, which ſhall only endure for a time; Why, then, is not that God deſired, who is truly Eternal, and ſhall endure for ever?

Is it not the greateſt folly, to be ſeeking the living amongſt the dead; to be ſeeking happineſs in that which is not? Oh, How juſtly may theſe things ſay to ſuch as relie upon them, and place their happineſs in them, as *Jacob* ſometime did to *Rachel*, Are we in God's ſtead?

Your Souls (my Brethren) are Immortal;

expect not ſo much therefore as a ſhadow of true happineſs from your creature-comforts, which are all but temporal, and unable to ſtretch themſelves to Eternity; Your riches, your honours, your pleaſures, Are theſe Immortal? Do theſe laſt for ever? Are your riches Eternal riches? Are your honours Eternal honours? Are your pleaſures everlaſting pleaſures? If not, Why then will you not learn in time to place your happineſs in this eternal Majeſty?

I tell you, The having of all theſe things without this eternal Majeſty, is nothing; becauſe, they will all be, ſhortly, reduced into nothing!

5. Conſider *the vanity of all your creature-enjoyments; and how ſoon they will forſake you.* Had you but once an Intereſt in God, he would never forſake you; for, He abides for ever: But, all the enjoyments of this world are of a vaniſhing nature, and obnoxious to a ſudden corruption.

What the holy Ghoſt ſaith of Riches, is true likewiſe of Honours, of Relations, of Pleaſures, and of all other Earthly-comforts, *They make themſelves wings, and fly away.*

The Rich man, in the Parable, invited himſelf to a Feaſt of fat things; and talked of proſperity laid up for many years: but, that very night was his Soul required of him, to pay the reckoning. *Herod* alſo, when the People had newly inveſted him with a god-head; preſently, ere it was well on, had it pulled over his ears, and became a prey to worms.

Many there are, that, for a while, ſoar aloft in Honours; and think, by the wings of Wealth, of Preferment, and Relations in the world, to

mount

mount up to Heaven; But, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, of thoſe that travel by Sea, *in a moment they go down into Hell*, into a *Sheol* of diſgrace, of poverty, and of great confuſion.

Why then will you ſet your hearts upon thoſe things, which, for ought you know, may be loſt as ſoon as gained; and taken from you, before ever you be well poſſeſſed of them: & yet neglect to labour for an Intereſt in this eternal Majeſty, of whom you may have an eternal Aſſurance? Who but fools, and men void of all Spiritual underſtanding, would thus prefer periſhing, before durable riches; the mutable creature, before God their Creator, who can never change; an uncertain Temporal enjoyment, before an Eternal portion; the meat that periſheth, before the meat that endures to Eternal life?

6. And laſtly, Conſider, *If you get not an Intereſt in this Eternal God here, you are ſure to be hereafter eternally miſerable.* Thoſe that will not here imbrace this eternal Majeſty, muſt expect in the life to come, an eternal miſery. You can not now refuſe God in the tenders of his Grace, but you will, by ſo doing, expoſe your ſelves to the moſt dreadful thunder-claps of his wrath and fury, which will reſt upon your Souls for ever.

The Lord ſets life and death before you; He promiſeth Eternal life to ſuch as embrace him; but all thoſe that will none of Him, he hath threatned with Eternal death, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8, 9.

Be ſerious then a little, I beſeech you, about theſe things; Shall not the clear Evidence of thoſe eternal Torments, that abide all ſuch as

live and die without an Intereſt in God, provoke us to make God the ſtrength of our heart, and our portion for ever?

Will you not (my Brethren) to prevent an eternal miſery, give diligence to get an Intereſt in this eternal Majeſty? To prevent everlaſting death, make him your portion, who is God over all, bleſſed for ever, without either beginning of dayes, or end of life? How come you to make ſo leight of the vengeance of eternal fire?

Who, amongſt us, alas! are ſo ſtout-hearted, that they can dwell with everlaſting burnings, that they are able to ſtruggle with the wrath to come, which will never be over-come, never come to an end? *Iſa.* 33. 14.

Is it a ſmall matter, to be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power? Is there any luſt, wherein thou liveſt, that will countervail the loſs of Eternal glory? and that affords ſo much pleaſure for the time, that thou ſhouldſt run the hazard of Eternal torments for it? Oh, little doſt thou now know, what it is to be puniſhed Eternally, to be ſeparated from the gracious preſence of God for ever, to be damned everlaſtingly, and for ever to lie under the wrath, the frowns, the diſpleaſure of an angry God!

Well, however, Thy own inability to ſtand under a leight affliction here, though but for a ſeaſon; to endure the Stone, the Gout, the Strangury, or the like bodily diſtempers, though but for a few dayes; may abundantly convince thee, That to lie under the wrath of God for ever, to be tor-

tormented in Hell for ever, and to have the flames of that infernal Pit eternally feeding upon thee, is a thing intolerable!

What extremity of madneſs, therefore, are all thoſe guilty of; who, to prevent this Eternal miſery, will not labour for an Intereſt in God, who being an eternal Majeſty, cannot only deliver them out of the hands of that Eternal miſery, but likewiſe make them Eternally happie, and glorious with Himſelf, in the Kingdom of his Glory!

Fourthly, By way of *Conſolation: Is it ſo, that the God whom we worſhip, is Eternal?* Then let all true Believers, whoſe God is the Lord, open their mouths wide, that they may ſuck and be ſatisfied with the Marrow and Fatneſs that drops from this Truth! What an *Hybla* may this be in the mouths, and what Muſick in the ears of all ſuch as have an Intereſt in this eternal Majeſty! Here is an inexhauſtible Fountain of all goodneſs; here is a boundleſs Ocean of divine conſolation; here is a Well of comfort ſpringing up unto eternal life; at the head whereof, all ſuch as have an Intereſt in God, may, upon all occaſions, refreſh themſelves.

Oh, What a River of divine Conſolations doth flow from this glorious Attribute of God's Eternity to all God's People, the ſtreams whereof may exceedingly rejoyce and make glad their hearts in the worſt of conditions.

1. *If the God whom we worſhip be an Eternal God, then let this comfort all you that have an Intereſt in Him, againſt the vanity, and periſhableneſs of all your creature-enjoyments.* The choiſeſt of our creature-

comforts, is but a *Jonah*'s Gourd, that came up in a night, and periſhed in a night: But yet, Chriſtian, let not thy hope die, and thy comforts exſpire; for thy God never dies, but ſhall abide for ever!

'Tis obſerved by ſome, that the two ſons of the *Firſt man*, carried in their Names a *Memorandum* of what they, and all their Poſterity, were here to expect. *Cain* ſignifies Poſſeſſion, and *Abel* Vanity; to teach us, that all our poſſeſſions are obnoxious to vanity, and of a periſhing nature: But yet, if the Lord be our God, this may be a Cordial to us, miniſtring comfort againſt the mortality, and periſhableneſs of all theſe things; that though our health, our honours, our liberty, our eſtates, our relations, are not here Eternal, yet our God is truly Eternal, and alwayes the ſame.

Shouldſt thou, Chriſtian, lay up for thy ſelf a Treaſure on Earth; why, the Moth would corrupt it, and Theeves, breaking through, might ſteal it from thee: but, having made this Eternal God thy Treaſure, He is above corruption, He is the *better part, that can never be taken from thee*, Luk. 10.42.

Oh happie, and thrice happie you (my dearly beloved) whoſe God is the Lord. When thoſe men, that have their portion in this life, ſhall part with theirs, you are led to a fuller fruition of your portion; their portion is but ſome periſhable-enjoyment, but yours is a God that is truly Eternal: at the beſt, their portion is but ſome temporal bleſſing of God, that will in time be taken from them; but yours, is God himſelf,

ſelf, over all bleſſed, and bleſſing you for e-
ver!

True it is, Chriſtian, all our creature-comforts are of a vaniſhing nature, and liable to a ſpeedie decay; thoſe we have, are no other than running banquets; if delicate, and ſerved in with ſtate, yet they are ſoon over, and do preſently wax old like a garment: I, but yet our God ſhall endure for ever; there is no wrinckle upon the brow of Eternitie; the hand of his Mercie never withereth, the arm of his Power never drieth up, nor do the bowels of his Love, towards his own People, at any time waſte, and ſpend themſelves.

Though your creature-enjoyments are not Eternal, but will ſhortly fail you; yet, if you be ſuch as have an Intereſt in this eternal God, he will never fail you, but will prove an everlaſting Friend!

2. *If the God whom we worſhip be an Eternal God, then let this bear up your Spirits that have an Intereſt in Him, under the ſenſe of your own mortality, and give comfort to your Souls in a dying hour.* Many of God's deareſt Children, are, all their life long, through the fear of death, ſubject to bondage: when they look upon their face, their arms, their body, as that which will ſhortlie moulder into duſt; when they conſider that the time is at hand, when they muſt undergo the fatal ſtroke of death, lie down in the grave, and no more ſee the goodneſs of God in the land of the living; they ſtartle at it, and it's a terrour to them: But, would they conſider, that, though they muſt die, and turn to rottenneſs, yet their God can never die, but endures for ever; their

God is an eternal God, and his love towards them is an Eternal love, which death it ſelf can not poſſibly diſſolve; With what comfort might they look this King of Terrours in the face?

What though, Chriſtian, thou muſt ſhortlie die, and ſee corruption; yet thy God is above corruption, He lives for ever: And ſhall not this make thee reſolve, with the *Pſalmiſt*, not to be afraid, *Though thou walk in the valley of the ſhadow of death?*

What, though this crazie Bark of thy bodie will be certainlie ſplit, ere long, upon the fatal Rock of Death; yet, canſt thou think, Chriſtian, that thy eternal God will not give thee a Plank whereupon to ſwim to the ſhore of Eternal Reſt?

What though, in a word, thy *earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolved*, yet haſt thou not ſtill *a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, Eternal in the heavens?* 2 Cor. 5. 1.

Let not therefore death temporal, any longer be a terrour to thee, ſeeing it cannot ſeparate thee from, but ſhall bring thee to, neereſt Communion with an eternal Majeſty, with him that is God over All, bleſſed for ever!

3. *If the God whom we worſhip be an Eternal God, then let this alſo be matter of comfort to you that have an Intereſt in Him, concerning the death of your Friends, Relations, and Chriſtian Acquaintance.* Surely, this cannot but be an occaſion of great ſorrow and trouble of mind to them that live by, depend upon, and are daily receiving benefit from others; to conſider the mortality of

ſuch

ſuch perſons, by whoſe life and breath (under God) they have hitherto been ſuſtained; and from whom, in a great meaſure, they receive their comforts, and means of living: But, the due conſideration of God's Eternitie, might be a good allay to all this ſorrow; and indeed, this may miniſter abundance of comfort in this caſe, to conſider, That though Friends die, and Acquaintance die, and Relations die, though Husbands die, and Wives die, though Fathers die, and Mothers die, and Miniſters die; yet, our God is an Eternal God, he never dies, but will ſtill be a Father to the Fatherleſs, an Husband to the Widow, a Teacher to the Paſtor-leſs, and an everlaſting Friend to all thoſe, amongſt his People, that are here Friendleſs, and have none to look after them.

4. *If the God whom we worſhip be an Eternal God, then let this comfort all thoſe that have an Intereſt in Him, againſt thoſe many diffident and perplexing fears that ſo often ſurprize them, leſt at laſt they ſhould make ſhip-wrack of Faith and a good Conſcience, and ſo turn damned Apoſtates.* The preſumptuous man never fears his ſtation; but a Child of God, he trembles to think how he ſhall ever be able to bear off the ſhock of temptations, and to ſtand in a day of tryal!

As *David* ſaid of *Saul*; ſo, there is no Chriſtian, but ſometime ſaith, I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of ſuch a ſin, of ſuch a temptation, of ſuch a luſt; and ſo undoubtedly he would, had he not for his God, the *Antient of dayes.*

It's true, Chriſtian, thou wouldſt fall for ever, hadſt thou not an Intereſt in Him that lives for ever:

ever: But now, this bleſſed Attribute of God's Eternity, it gives thy Soul everlaſting ſecurity; ſo that, maugre the power of all unruly corruptions from within, of all ſubtile temptations, violent aſſaults, and threatning frowns from without, thou art ſure to perſevere in grace, till thou come to glory.

God is able to ſave to the utmoſt, becauſe he ever lives to ſuſtain us; and, becauſe he ever lives, therefore thy grace ſhall never die; thou art ſure, Chriſtian, to hold out to the laſt, becauſe thou haſt an Intereſt in Him, who is the firſt and the laſt: ſure thou art, to be preſerved blameleſs all the dayes of thy life, to the end thereof, becauſe that God, who is without beginning of dayes, and end of life, is thy God!

5. *If the God whom we worſhip be Eternal, then let this bear up the Spirits of all ſuch as have an Intereſt in Him, under all thoſe fears of want and poverty that are apt to be upon them.* Thus we find the Prophet *Habakkuk*, improving this bleſſed and glorious Attribute of God's Eternity: Becauſe their God was an Eternal God, he therefore concludes, *That they ſhould not die.* The Prophet indeed knew well, that the Lord never undertook to maintain all his People at the ſame rate, but only to ſupply their wants; and therefore he doth not promiſe himſelf dainties, but neceſſaries; not ſuch things as would keep him aloft, but only ſuch things as would keep him alive, *Hab.*1.12.

Though the Lions want, and die for hunger; though ſuch Lion-like perſons, as are of greateſt ſtrength and power to get proviſion for themſelves,

ſelves, ſhould pine with famine, and die through want: Yet they, whoſe God is the Lord, can never pine with hunger, nor die through want, becauſe their God, by whom they live, upon whom they depend, and from whom they have all their proviſion, never dies; but, will be an Eternal ſtore, *Pſal.* 34. 10.

But, Oh we of little Faith, how prone are we to diſtruſt, and to vex our ſelves with heart-dividing cares!

Whilſt there is water in the bottle, whilſt ſuch a friend lives, ſuch eſtates, ſuch waies of gaining, ſuch worldly in-comes to ſupplie us and ours, with *Hagar* we poſſibly complain not: Oh, but when the water is ſpent in the bottle, when our eſtates fail, when our worldly in-comes are intercepted, and our probabilities of proviſion are ſmall, then we are ready, with her, to ſit down and weep! *Gen.*21.16.

But may we not, Chriſtians, ſay, as once *David* did in another caſe, *This is our infirmity?* Have we not hitherto been fed, and who is it that gives us our daily bread? Do we not hitherto live, and who is the fountain of that life? Is it not God, over all, Bleſſed for ever? And, is He like man that he ſhould change, or the ſons of men, that he ſhould caſt off? Was he God All-ſufficient in time paſt, making proviſion for thee, and thine; and, is He not the ſame ſtill, doth he ceaſe to be God, is his hand ſhortned, hath his loving kindneſs failed for ever, that he ſhould forbear to make proviſion for his own People, How then can he be an Eternal God? Did God only undertake to maintain thee, and ſupply thee with

things

things needful, only for a week, a month, or a year; only whilſt ſuch a Friend lived, whilſt ſuch an Eſtate laſted, whilſt ſuch a Way of living could be followed, and no longer? Well, there is a principle of *Atheiſm* and *Idolatry* at the root of theſe fears and heart-dividing cares; we are apt to ſacrifice to our own net, as though we lived not by Providence, but our own Induſtry; as though what we have, came not from God's providing, but from our own fore-caſting for our ſelves, and plodding in the world.

Diligent in our places, it's true, we muſt all be; and a providential care is allowed us: but yet when the bleſſing of God upon our diligence hath done that for us, which the Lord hath denied to ſuch as have uſed as great diligence as our ſelves, if not greater; we muſt take heed of admiring our ſelves, and ſacrificing to our own Net; as though God had not made the difference in temporals, as well as ſpirituals.

I tell you, Such a frame of heart as this, will caſt a man down under every frowning providence, and make him ready to fear he ſhall be undone, his eſtate ruined, and himſelf and his, brought to beggary for every diſappointment and loſs that he meets with in the world.

You therefore, that are the People of God, take heed of it, learn to ſee that you and yours are at God's keeping; and then the due conſideration of his Eternity, will ſufficiently comfort you under all your wants.

For if (Chriſtian) thy Sun be ſtill ſhining, Why ſhouldſt thou fancy nothing to thy ſelf but darkneſs? If thy Fountain be an inexhauſtible foun-

fountain, and ſtill runs, Why ſhouldſt thou fear to die by thirſt, becauſe ſome ſmall Conduit-pipes are broken off, and ſome little Rivolets ſtopped up? If thy Store be ſtill ſafe, and thy treaſure remaining, Why for the loſs of ſome few pence, ſhouldſt thou count thy ſelf undone? If the Lord be an eternal God, if he ſtill lives, and lives to be the God of all thy Mercies, Oh then, How unreaſonably ſinful is it, becauſe ſome probabilities of proviſion from the world, wherein thou hadſt put too much confidence, fail; to kill thy ſelf with heart-dividing cares, with diſtruſtfulneſs, and with fears of want?

When *Hagar* looked into her bottle, and ſaw that empty, ſhe fell a weeping; but when God had opened her eyes, and let her ſee the Fountain, then ſhe was ſatisfied; for, then ſhe knew that ſhe could fill her bottle again: So, could we, whoſe bottles are almoſt empty, but open our eyes and ſee God by Faith, remaining as an inexhauſtible Fountain of all goodneſs; this might make us refrain our tears, and abundantly ſatisfie our Souls, yeilding matter of comfort to us under all thoſe fears of want and poverty that lie upon us.

For, Why ſhould ſuch fear the wanting of things needful and good for them, whoſe God never fails, but endures for ever?

6. And laſtly, *If the God whom we worſhip be an Eternal God, then let this comfort all thoſe that have an Intereſt in Him, in the certain Aſſurance of Life everlaſting, and the full enjoyment of Him in glory, to all Eternity.* That of Chriſt, is verified in this caſe, where ſaith He to his Diſciples, *Becauſe*

cauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo, Joh. 14. 19. Becauſe, Chriſtian, thy God lives an eternally bleſſed life; therefore thou thy ſelf ſhalt be eternally bleſſed: Having the Lord for thy God, upon the account of this bleſſed Attribute of his Eternity, thou haſt all the reaſon in the world to comfort thy ſelf with the aſſured hopes of endleſs felicity, of everlaſting happineſs, of an eternal weight of glory! For, this eternal God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; not of the mortal, but of the immortal; not of thoſe that are happy for a time, but of thoſe that ſhall be everlaſtingly happy, and bleſſed for ever.

Though in our ſelves we be frail dying creatures, yet this bleſſed Attribute of God's Eternity will undoubtedly crown all ſuch amongſt us, as have an Intereſt in Him, with Eternity of life, glory, and unconceivable joyes.

Oh then, How great is the comfort that may juſtly accrue to every Believer from the conſideration of God's Eternity; this makes thy comforts eternal, thy crown eternal, thy life eternal, thy glory eternal glory, and thy happineſs everlaſting happineſs!

Here indeed (Chriſtian) all thy comforts are of a dying and periſhable nature: but in Heaven they will not be ſo; there the Sun never ſets, there the night never approaches, there thy joyes are never abated, there thy glory can never be eclipſed, there thy life, thy comfort, thy happineſs, ſhall all be Eternal and never end, becauſe God that is thy life, thy comfort, thy happineſs, is truly Eternal, without either beginning of dayes, or end of life.

'As a mortal father begets a mortal ſon, ſo 'the immortal God can beget no ſons but ſuch 'as are immortal like their Father; neither can 'any of Gods regenerate ſo far degenerate, as 'by falling from Grace to ceaſe to be his Sons, 'and ſo fall ſhort in the end of the *inheritance 'incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 'reſerved for them in Heaven*, 1 Pet. 1. 4.

Oh then, that by Faith we would fix our minds upon this eternal Felicity, admiring this eternal Majeſty that will beſtow it upon us. Is it nothing to rejoyce with that joy that no man can take from us? to live a life that ſhall never run into death? to take poſſeſſion of a Kingdom that can never be moved? to be, in a word, with the Lord, beholding the light of his countenance, which is better than life it ſelf, and that for ever? Oh what heart is ſo dull, as not to be filled with extaſies, trances, and raptures of joy, at theſe things!

Chriſtians, your comforts are eternal, and therefore ſee that you walk comfortably; let not a moment's miſery, daſh you out of countenance, for whom there remains an eternity of glory. Let the World and Hell do what they can to make you miſerable, yet ſtill you are truly bleſſed, and everlaſtingly happy; becauſe you have made God, who is truly Eternal, your Portion.

FINIS.

SERMON

SERMON V.

Mat. 11. 23.

And thou Capernaum, *which art exalted unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell.*

WHether men have received much or little, it is all in reference to an eternal account; but to be ſure, *Upon whomſoever much is beſtowed, of them much ſhall be required*, Luke 12. 48. Our bleſſed Lord, therefore, having beſtowed many ſignal mercies, and glorious priviledges upon *Capernaum*; he comes here to upbraid her, and withal, to let her know, to what extremity of wrath and everlaſting miſery ſhe ſtood every moment obnoxious; becauſe ſhe had neither improved her priviledges, nor brought forth fruit anſwerable to the coſt which the Lord had beſtowed upon her.

And thou Capernaum, *which art exalted unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell.*

The Text is a dreadful Commination, a terrible

ble thunder-clap, and flash of lightning, proceeding out of the Lord's mouth against *Capernaum*, one of the most noted and eminent places for Gospel-priviledges in all the world. In which, you may observe these two things:

1. *Capernaum*'s glory and exaltation; they were *exalted unto Heaven.*

2. *Capernaum*'s abasement and humiliation; they shall be *brought down to Hell.*

In her exaltation, *Capernaum* seems delightful; but in her humiliation, she proves dreadful. Her exaltation is hyperbolical and excessive, made higher than it was; but her humiliation is without any Hyperbole, and such as she will find it true in the letter, to all Eternity.

But let us briefly run over the words as they lie in order, and then we shall give you the point of Doctrine, which from them we think good to insist upon, for your edification.

Our blessed Lord had a little before been upbraiding *Corazin* and *Bethsaida*, because they repented not, after all those mighty works that he had done amongst them; telling them, that it was like to *be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *in the day of Judgment, than for them*: Now, lest *Capernaum* should think her self to be exempted from that dreadful doom, he makes, by this particle, a transition from denouncing woes against *Corazin* and *Bethsaida*, and so passeth over to the City of his own abode; as who should say, Having pronounced to each of them their woes, I have no better tydings for thee, *Capernaum*!

Thou Capernaum] If you respect the notation of the word, it signifieth the place or Town of

Conſolation; but if you reſpect the place it ſelf, it was a maritine Town, ſituate in *Galilee*, neer to the lake *Geneſareth*, and bordering upon the Tribes of *Zabulon* and *Nepthali*. Here it was, that our bleſſed Lord was much converſant; here he takes up the place of his chief reſidence and abode; here he exerciſeth his Miniſtry, manifeſting his power in many glorious miracles and mighty works to the world: ſo that, during the time of his Miniſtry, here Chriſt preached moſt, and here above all other places he manifeſted his eternal Power and God-head, by the many great and miraculous works that he wrought amongſt them; inſomuch, that it became a Proverb, *Whatſoever we have heard done in* Capernaum, *do alſo in thy own Country*, Mat. 4. 13. Luke 4. 23. Here, to be ſhort, *Capernaum* by a Metonymie (*locus, pro incolis*) is put for the Inhabitants of *Capernaum*; before which, for the greater emphaſis, our bleſſed Lord hath prefixed the perſonal pronoun, as who ſhould ſay, Thou κατ' ἐξοχὴν, *Thou eſpecially*, and above all the reſt.

Which art exalted unto Heaven] The phraſe is not here to be underſtood literally, as if the Inhabitants of *Capernaum* had been taken up with *Paul* into the third Heaven, into the ſeat of the Bleſſed, and the Paradiſe of God; but we are to underſtand it Allegorically, of the high degree of honour and eminency to which *Capernaum* was exalted, through the expreſſion of God's great and extraordinary mercy to this people, they being advanced above all others, by the Preſence, Miniſtry, and miraculous Works of Chriſt amongſt them.

Shalt

Shalt be brought down to Hell] These words hold forth *Capernaum*'s abaſement and humiliation, *Which*, as one well obſerves, *had it gone before, as it did in our bleſſed Lord, and all his people, it had been happy; but to be miſerable after mercy tendered, to be caſt down to Hell after lifting up to Heaven, is very dreadful.*

Hell is ſometimes, as Heaven before, taken Allegorically for the loweſt and ſaddeſt ſtate, in reſpect of ſome temporal miſery; but ſometimes it is taken properly for the place and puniſhment of the damned, and ſo we underſtand it in this place; our bleſſed Lord threatning the Inhabitants of *Capernaum* with Death, Hell, and everlaſting Miſery, becauſe they brought not forth fruit anſwerable to his Preſence, his Miniſtry, his miraculous Works, and the means of Grace amongſt them.

So then the point of Doctrine, that from the words thus explained, we purpoſe to obſerve and proſecute, is this.

Doct. *That all ſuch as continue barren and unfruitful under the means of Grace, are in a moſt dangerous and ſad condition.* Whether it be a publick Nation, or a particular Congregation, or a private perſon, that thrive not, but live and die unfruitful under the powerful means of Salvation, their eſtate is moſt dreadful and lamentable. *Capernaum* was a place, a people ſingularly honoured by God with many ſignal mercies, and glorious Goſpel-priviledges: they were lifted up to Heaven in the means of Grace; but yet, not bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, here we find them thrown down, without all mercy, into the

loweſt Hell, to be below the worſt of men, even the filthy *Sodomites* themſelves, in the pit of eternal Perdition. Where God hath moſt abounded in his goodneſs, he will be moſt ſevere in his puniſhments, if that people remain unfruitful. All thoſe that enjoy the means of Grace, and yet continue barren and unfruitful, are obnoxious every moment to the ſtroke of God's wrath and heavy diſpleaſure, *Mat.* 3. 10. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.*

In the proſecution of this Doctrine, having firſt ſhewed who they are that continue barren and unfruitful under the means of Grace, I ſhall give you the *Reaſons*, why their condition muſt needs be moſt ſad and dangerous, and ſo come to the *practical Improvement* of the *Doctrine*, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, Then I am to let you know, *who they are that continue barren and unfruitful under the means of Grace*, and that I ſhall do in theſe particulars.

1. *Such as bring forth nothing but the leaves of an outward profeſſion, inſtead of the ripe fruits of a ſanctified nature, and of an holy converſation.* Many a vain man is ſecure and confident of his Salvation, by reaſon of his Profeſſion, though he himſelf be an empty Vine, doing all for himſelf, but nothing for God; profeſsing that he knows God, but in works denying him, *Hoſ.* 10. 1. *Tit.* 1. 16. Well, the fruit which God accepts, is a renewed nature, and an holy life; without theſe, a Profeſsion will not ſerve the turn. The ſhadow without the ſubſtance, the form without the power

power of godlineſs, will avail you nothing. You may profeſs Chriſt all your dayes; yet if you bring not forth fruit worthy of repentance, and amendment of life, your condition is moſt lamentable and dreadful.

Let a man talk never ſo much of God, yet if he walk not with God; let him have never ſuch holy words and expreſſions, yet if he have unholy works and actions; let his profeſſion be never ſo glorious, yet if his life and converſation be not conform thereunto, but profane and ungodly; this man is ſtill unfruitful under the means of Grace, and his condition, for the preſent, moſt ſad and dangerous.

As Chriſt curſed the fig-tree, which had leaves, but no fruit; ſo His curſe will abide upon all you, who have the leaves of a Chriſtian profeſſion, but want the fruit of an holy life and converſation, *Mat.* 21. 19.

Oh then, conſider this, all you that have a name to live, but indeed are yet dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; all you that hold out the form, but indeed do yet deny the power of godlineſs: What avails your external profeſſion, ſo long as your natures are yet unſanctified, and your lives unreformed? Do you not yet know, that God looks for fruit, and not for leaves? Do you not know, that your external profeſſion, if you be not inwardly ſanctified, and become new creatures; if you be not ſoundly reformed, both in heart and life, will but aggravate your condemnation, and help to ſink your ſouls deeper in Hell?

2. *Such as bring not forth ſeaſonable fruit.* 'Tis ſaid of *David*'s bleſſed man, That *as a tree planted*

ted by the Rivers of water, he ſhall bring forth fruit in his ſeaſon, Pſal. 1.3. What *Solomon* ſpeaks of a *word*, the ſame may I ſay of every *duty* in ſeaſon, *It is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver*; but being out of ſeaſon, and not rightly timed, it's often dangerous.

That may be good at one time, which at another, through the unſeaſonableneſs of it, may prove accidentally evil. When God hath given us ſome eminent ſignal mercy, now the fruit he expects at our hands, is thanſgiving and praiſe: when his Church is as a bleeding Vine, and iniquity abounds, now the Lord *calls to weeping, and mourning, and girding in ſack-cloth*; and that is the fruit that he looks for, *Iſa.* 22. 12. But, to hang our harps upon the Willows, to ſit weeping and diſconſolate, when God by ſome ſignal Providence calls aloud for rejoycing: Or, when the ſigns of God's anger, like a blazing-ſtar do appear; when a deluge of profaneneſs over-ſpreads the whole Land; when we ſee the Spouſe of Chriſt with garments dipped in blood; when we ſee the Agents of that Man of ſin, perſwading people ſecretly, in every place, to deſert the Proteſtant, and eſpouſe the Popiſh Religion; inſtead of a Bible, to embrace a Crucifix; inſtead of holy Prayers, an idolatrous Maſs; and inſtead of going to Church, that they ſhould go on Pilgrimage to ſome Saint or Relick; when in a word, we ſee men make the Commandments of God void through their Traditions, and the glory departing from us; then, not to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; then, not to turn our laughter into mourning, and our joy into heavineſs, is an argument

gument, that we ſtill remain barren and unfruitful under the means of Grace. For, that only will God own as fruit, which is done in ſeaſon, and rightly timed.

Oh then, how much are we all concerned to ſee that our duties be rightly timed; and that all our fruit be brought forth in ſeaſon! Private Devotions in the time of publick Worſhip; hanging our Harps upon the Willows, when God calls to thankſgiving and praiſe; much more rejoycing, when the tokens of God's wrath are abroad; when the Lord ſtands upon the threſhold of the Temple, as if he were ready to take wings and be gone; when God ſeems to be packing up, and carrying away his deſpiſed Goſpel; all this is full as unſeaſonable as ſnow in Harveſt, and will prove no leſs prejudicial. God calls not ſo much for fruit, as for ſeaſonable fruit; nor will he ever own that as fruit, which is not ſeaſonable, and rightly timed.

3. *Such as bring not forth fruit, that is anſwerable to their ſtanding, and to the coſt which God hath beſtowed upon them.* You count not your children to learn, if their learning be not ſomething anſwerable to the time that they have ſpent in getting it, & to the coſt that you have been at with them: So if your proficiency be not anſwerable to your ſtanding in the wayes of God; and your fruit, if that be not anſwerable to the means of Grace, under which you have lived, the Lord will never own you for fruitful, but looks upon you, as barren and unprofitable ſervants.

Do you therefore bring forth fruit, in ſome meaſure anſwerable to your ſtanding, and the

means vouchſafed; as knowing, that where much is given, not a little is required, *Luke* 12. 48.

As you are of longer ſtanding in the Goſpel, and have had any of you more coſt beſtowed upon you, more light, more frequent opportunities, more powerful adminiſtrations, than others; ſo, Are you grown more knowing, more ſtable, more fruitful in every good word and work, than others?

Are your ſouls, as a ſpiritual *Eſhcol*, full of ripe cluſters, and bunches, of heavenly grapes? Do you bring forth fruit, like the Land of *Egypt*, by handfuls? So that as *Gideon* ſometime ſaid of *Abiezer*'s Vintage, *The gleanings of* Ephraim, *are better than the Vintage of* Abiezer: The like we may ſay of your ſmalleſt gleanings of ſpiritual fruits, that they are better, more fragrant, more ripe, and more flouriſhing, than the Vintage of many others.

Oh, let not any amongſt you think, that, being of longer ſtanding, and having had more coſt, than others, beſtowed upon them, they can eſcape the imputation of barren and unfruitful, as others may.

Thoſe that are but newly planted in the Lord's Vineyard, and upon whom the Lord hath beſtowed no great coſt, though they have but a little faith, a little knowledge, a little grace; yet, if true, they will paſs for fruitful: but as for you, that are of a longer ſtanding, and upon whom God hath beſtowed greater coſt; if you be not fruitful, in every good word and work; if your lives be not filled with all the fruits of Righteouſneſs, God will ſtill look upon you, as barren fig-trees, as unprofitable ſervants. 4. And

4. And laſtly; *Such as bring not forth fruit ſuitable to that relation, that capacity, that ſtation, wherein God hath ſet him.* Some will pray excellently, hear Sermons often, and diſcourſe well; but it's much to be feared, God at laſt will cut them down as barren fig-trees, becauſe ſo much defective in relative Duties. Such as are fruit-bearing Trees in God's Vineyard, are like a Star ſhining in the proper Orb and ſtation, wherein God hath ſet them; they will labour to fill up their relations, and to go through all the parts of Religion, as the Sun through all the Signs of the Zodiack.

And certainly, thoſe that endeavour not to bring forth fruit ſuitable to their proper ſtation; thoſe that are not good in their ſeveral relations; thoſe, who though they ſeem to be travelling towards Heaven, yet leave the duties of their places, as a *Terra incognita*, which they never come neer, God will never look upon them as fruitful; but however in other things they may appear glorious, yet he will count them no better than ſlothful ſervants.

So then, Are you careful to fill up your relations? Do you mind, and with diligence perform, the Duties of your own places and callings? My Brethren, not to bring forth ſuitable fruit, will ſpoyl all other fruit, that in any other kind we bring forth.

If a man were to make up a Medicine, and ſhould leave out the chief Ingredient, this would ſpoyl all: So, if you bring not forth proper fruit; but neglect the Duties of that Relation, wherein God hath ſet you, God may juſtly cut you down as

as barren Trees, good for nothing but to cumber the ground.

Wherein lies the goodneſs of a Member, but to diſcharge its proper office? So thou that art a Parent, not bringing up thy children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; thou that art a Maſter, not going before thy Family in the example of an holy life; thou that art an Husband, not dwelling with thy Wife as a man of knowledge; thou that art a Child, not honouring thy Parents; thou that art a Servant, not obeying thy Maſter; thou that art a Wife, not quietly ſubmitting to thy Husband in all things lawful, and pleaſing him as thy Head; what good can God ever expect at thy hands? Every one is ſo far fruitful, and ſo far a Chriſtian, as he makes conſcience of Relation-duties: To be ſure, if thou count thy ſelf a good Chriſtian, and yet art not a good Husband; this may juſtly lay thee under the ſuſpicion of an Hypocrite, of a Tree not bringing forth *good fruit, whoſe end is to be burned!*

Secondly, Having thus let you know, *Who they are, that continue barren under the means of Grace*; let me now give you the *Reaſons*, why ſuch are in a moſt dangerous and ſad condition.

1. *Becauſe all ſuch, as barren fig-trees, do but cumber the ground in God's Vineyard*, Luk. 13.7. Better were it, that we ſhould never be planted in God's Vineyard, than prove therein, as unfruitful and barren fig-trees, to cumber the ground. For how ſhall the Lord of the Vineyard endure, inſtead of fruit, to ſee his ground over-grown with wilde, luxuriant, and barren Vines? Better certainly were it, that we ſhould live in *Sodom*, than in *Capernaum*,

pernaum, if therein we continue barren, not labouring to be fruitful in every good word and work. It is worſt living in a Land of Righteouſneſs, if we work iniquity: moſt dangerous living in a *valley of Viſion*, in a *Goſhen* of Goſpel-light, if therein we have *fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*. For as weeds in the garden, are ſooner pluckt up, than weeds in the high-way; ſo no Trees are more ſurely for the fire, than thoſe, that being planted in the Lord's own Vineyard, do yet continue barren, not abounding with the fruits of Righteouſneſs.

They that are next the Sanctuary, are neereſt danger, remaining barren and unfruitful, by the waters thereof; and certainly, God will be ſanctified in ſuch as draw near him in the means of Grace, or elſe he will get himſelf glory in their juſt deſtruction, *Lev.* 10. 3.

2. *Becauſe ſuch receiving the grace of God in vain, do fruſtrate His expectations.* The Husband-man, after the long manuring of the field, looks for fruit from the field; The Shepherd looks for encreaſe from the flock, which he watcheth, defendeth, and feedeth: So God, the Husband-man, and great Shepherd of our Souls, He looks for fruit from us, whom, by the means of grace, he manureth, defendeth, and feedeth. Now then, to fruſtrate God's expectations, ſo that all the means of grace, in regard of any ſaving good, have been as the pouring of Water upon the Rock, the lighting of a Candle to the blind, and the ſowing of Seed upon the ſand; this muſt needs make a man's condition moſt lamentable and dangerous. For, this makes the Lord repent,

repent, as it were, of all the Mercies and Priviledges that ever he beſtowed upon us.

As *David* ſaid of his labour and care about *Nabal*, *In vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the Wilderneſs*: So, may the Lord well ſay of all that continue unfruitful under the means of grace; In vain have I ſet my Miniſters as watchmen upon their Walls, in vain have I cauſed them to hear the glad tydings of Peace, in vain have I planted them in my Vineyard, in vain have I digged about them, and pruned them, and watered them; they are ſtill unfruitful!

Oh then, How dreadful muſt be the condition of every unfruitful Soul! You that have diſappointed God, by your unfruitfulneſs, in his expectations, Oh, how juſtly will he, at laſt, diſappoint you of that crown, that kingdom, that eternal reward, which at laſt you expected to receive at his hands!

3. *Becauſe ſuch at laſt will be found excuſeleſs, and have nothing to ſay for themſelves*, Matth. 25. When that wicked and ſlothful ſervant, who hid his Lords Talent in a Napkin, was called to an account for it; the Text obſerves of him, that *he was ſpeechleſs*: So, you that enjoy many precious Talents, you that live under the means of Grace, and yet continue unfruitful; Oh, how ſpeechleſs, and everlaſtingly confounded will you be, when God ſhall call you to a ſtrict account for all theſe things!

God may ſay to us, I have planted you by the waters of my Sanctuary, I have ſent unto you alſo all my Servants, the Prophets, riſing up early and ſending them; you have been higher than the

the Nations round about you, you have been ever lifted up to Heaven in Goſpel-priviledges; whilſt others ſate in darkneſs, you have dwelt in *Goſhen* light; the Sun-beams of my Mercy, and *Sion*'s ſilver drops have daily fallen upon you: But, Where is your fruit? How have you anſwered all this care, and coſt, and diſcriminating Mercy? Your enjoyments have been great and glorious; but, What are your Improvements? Are you filled with all the fruits of Righteouſneſs, or, are you not filled? Oh, how unexcuſable muſt they be found, who under ſuch glorious advantages have lived unfruitful! Make as leight of it now as you can, yet certainly if God find you without fruit, he will leave you without excuſe to all Eternity!

4. *Becauſe all ſuch are in danger to be deſerted of God.* Whilſt we are preſent with God in a way of Duty, he is preſent with us in a way of Mercy: but, if once he ſee us grow barren and unfruitful, under the means of grace, he will certainly leave us.

As the Phyſician leaves the ſick which are incurable; as the Husband-man leaves the field, which, after much labour and coſt, ſtill remaineth barren: So the Lord will leave all thoſe, who, after all his coſt beſtowed upon them, do ſtill continue barren and unfruitful, as men without hope.

Oh then, how dangerous and lamentable is the caſe of all unfruitful perſons under the means of grace; from ſuch the God of Heaven is departed, he hath turned his back upon them; and though, like *Eſau*, they ſeek him with tears, yet they ſhall not find him, *Heb.* 12.17. You

You then that are yet barren and unfruitful, consider this! Did *Micah* so sadly cry out for the loss of an Idol-God; and yet having lost the only true God, whose loving kindness is better than life it self, through your own unfruitfulness, Have you not just cause to cry out, and as men undone, to bewail your selves?

5. *Because, seeing his grace thus abused, it provoketh the Lord against them.* When men abuse Grace, they make the God of all Grace and Consolation their enemy; and as his Grace is despised, so his wrath will take place, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5.

If the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, do not lead you to Repentance, and provoke you to bring forth fruit worthy of Repentance; you will but treasure up wrath to your selves against the day of wrath, wherein God's Justice will avenge the quarrel of his abused Mercy, upon you.

God expects fruit answerable to the means afforded; nor is there any thing that more provokes Him, than to see men barren and unfruitful under powerful Administrations: And certainly, if still you continue such, his lengthened-out patience, and abused mercy, will turn to fury.

6. And lastly, *Because this exposeth them to ruine, and everlasting destruction.* Such are wicked and slothful Servants, hiding their Lord's Talent in a Napkin, and must therefore be cast *into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Matth. 25. 30.

Such are *withered branches*, and must therefore be cast *into the fire, and burnt*, Joh. 15. 6.

Such

Such, inſtead of good fruit, bring forth nothing but *bryars and thorns*; and are therefore *nigh unto curſing, and in the end muſt be burned*, Heb.6.8.

Such, in a word, are barren trees in God's Vineyard, not bringing forth any good fruit, and therefore, being hewen down, muſt at laſt be caſt into the fire of God's wrath, *Mat.*3.10.

So then, by all this you ſee, God will condemn men at length as well for hiding, as for miſſpending their Talents; and not only ſhall men find their prophaneneſs, but alſo their unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, expoſing their Souls to hell, and eternal perdition.

Not only is the tree that bringeth forth evil fruit, in danger of being cut down and caſt into the fire, but alſo the tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, but continues barren, and unfruitful under the means of grace.

Oh then, how dangerous and ſad is the condition of every ſoul, who endeavours not to be fruitful in every good word and work!

If ſtill thou hide thy Lord's Talent in a napkin, not ſtriving to improve it; if ſtill thou content thy ſelf with the leaves of an outward profeſſion, inſtead of the fruits of an holy life and converſation; if ſtill, in a word, living under the means of Grace, thou remaineſt unfruitful, not endeavouring to abound in the work of the Lord; Oh then, conſider how obnoxious thou art, every moment, to the wrath of God: Thou canſt not ſay with *Agag*, *The bitterneſs of Death and Hell are over*, as not knowing but thou maiſt the next moment, like a barren Tree, be cut down, and made

made a fire-brand in Hell, to all Eternity!

Thirldly, and laſtly; Having thus given you the *Reaſons* of the *Doctrine*; come we now to the *practical Improvement* of it, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

1. By way of *Information*; *This may well teach us, that the means of Grace, are no ſufficient plea for Happineſs.* Tares may be in the ſame field with the Wheat, enjoying the ſame benefit of Sun, Rain, and Manure, and yet at laſt be bound in bundles and burnt: ſo you may enjoy the ſame Sermons, Sabbaths, and ſeaſons of Grace, with God's people, in the field of his Church, and yet at laſt be cut down, as Trees that have cumbred the ground, and be caſt into the fire. 'Tis not the having, but the improving of the means of Grace, that makes men happy: otherwiſe, if you remain barren and unfruitful under them, though for a while you may be in an imaginary Heaven; yet at laſt, with *Capernaum*, you may be brought down to Hell.

Such as wait at Wiſdom's gate, barely attending upon, and living under, the means of Grace, are not happy; but ſuch as get Wiſdom, find Underſtanding, and bring forth fruit with Patience, *Prov.* 3. 13, 18.

Let no man then deceive himſelf, preſuming of life and glory hereafter; becauſe he enjoys the means of Grace here. Thou mayeſt betake thyſelf to the Altar of thy Goſpel-priviledges; but if, under them, thou continue unfruitful, the juſtice of God will be ſure to fetch thee thence, and turn thy imaginary Heaven, into a real Hell; thy conceited Happineſs, into eternal Miſery!

Why

Why then ſhould any man be ſo far infatuated, as to think, becauſe the Lord grants him the means of Grace, he muſt needs at laſt crown him with life and glory, whether he make improvement of them, or no? Did *Bethſaida*, did *Corazin*, did *Capernaum* ſpeed ſo, when we find them all ſinking deeper in Hell, for not improving thoſe priviledges whereby they were lifted up to Heaven?

A man may enjoy Food, and Raiment, and Phyſick; and yet if theſe be neglected, he cannot live: So, let me tell you this, You may enjoy Sermons, and Sabbaths, and Sacraments; but yet not improving them ſo, as to make you fruitful in every good word and work, you can never be happy, but are in danger of eternal miſery!

As Circumciſion availeth nothing, if men keep not the Law: So all your Goſpel-priviledges can avail you nothing, if you bring not forth fruit worthy of Repentance, and amendment of life.

2. By way of *Information*: *See hence, in what a dangerous and ſad condition the generality of People is.* Viſions are open, yet few are gained: The dew of Heaven is daily dropping upon us, yet how prodigiouſly barren and unfruitful are we?

Have not the means of Grace been ſweetly, plainly, powerfully, diſpenſed amongſt us, and yet, are we not rather as a barren Wilderneſs, than as the Garden of God? Though with *Capernaum* God have lifted us up to Heaven, yet do we not, for the moſt part, like *Capernaum*,

deſerve, for our impenitency, barrenneſs, thriving wickedneſs, and wanton abuſe of the means of grace, to be brought down to Hell? Are not the plentiful ſhowers of heavenly Doctrine, the ſweet and warm beams of the Goſpel-Sun diſhonoured of moſt amongſt us, by a growing ſpring of Thorns, noyſom Weeds, curſed Opinions, and ungodly Practiſes? Oh, How thin is the number of Repenting, Reforming, Fruitbearing Chriſtians! How little do we ſee the Power and Glory of Chriſt in the Sanctuary, as experimented in former times? Is it not true of the moſt, That they have not the Root of the matter within them; they want that tenderneſs of Conſcience, that fear of God, that love to his Ordinances, that becomes all thoſe that enjoy the means of grace? What ſhall I more ſay? Are not moſt men grown Judgment-proof, and Sermon-proof; ſo that, neither the voice of God's Word, nor of his Rod, can amend them; but ſtill they continue as unfruitful, as ſenſual, debauched, and careleſs of what concerns their own Souls, as ever?

Oh, certainly theſe things may convince us, That the moſt men, living barren and unfruitful under the means of grace, are in a moſt lamentable, and dreadful condition. They are lifted up to Heaven; but, being thus unfruitful under the means of grace, they are ſure, with *Capernaum*, to ſink the deeper in Hell.

And ſhould not this make us all careful to look to our ſelves, when ſo many are every moment, through their own unfruitfulneſs, in danger of being caſt into Hell?

Oh,

Oh, think with thy ſelf, thou, who ſtill art unfruitful under the means of grace, What if the Lord, whom I take to be my gracious God, prove my avenging Judge? What if the ſins, I preſumed were blotted out, ſhall appear at laſt againſt me in legible Characters? What if my preſumptions of everlaſting Salvation, be confuted by eternal Damnation? What, if after I have been lifted up ſo far towards Heaven, I be thrown down with the multitude for my barrenneſs into Hell, and everlaſting burnings?

Secondly, By way of *Reprehenſion: This may juſtly reprove two ſorts of men, that offend againſt it.*

1. *This reproveth all thoſe, who, enjoying the means of grace, do yet (under the ſame) continue barren and unfruitful.* The Lord hath done as great things for us, as for *Capernaum*; He hath even lifted us up to Heaven in the means of grace; He hath ſet us apart for himſelf, and placed his Tabernacle in the midſt of us; He hath given us Paſtors, according to his own heart, to feed us with Knowledge, and Underſtanding; He hath made the place of our Habitation, a ſpiritual *Goſhen*, for Goſpel-light, whilſt others have ſate in *Egyptian*-darkneſs; He hath cauſed, in a word, the clouds of heavenly Doctrine, to pour down their ſweet, and comfortable dew upon us: And yet, alas, we continue barren, we ſtrive not to anſwer the coſt at which God hath been with us; and are we not then, think you, blame worthy, thus to turn the grace of God into wantonneſs, thus to hide our Lord's Talent in a Napkin, and to receive the grace of God in vain? 2 *Cor.*6.1.

As the men of the City of *Jericho* ſaid of that, *The ſituation of the City is pleaſant, but the water is naught, and the ground barren:* So may we not truly ſay of many amongſt us, The Lord hath ſeated them in a pleaſant place, in a fruitful land, in a paradiſe of all ſpiritual enjoyments, and yet they are not made fruitful, but rather barren by the waters that are daily diſtilling upon their Souls, 2 *King.*2.19.

Oh fooliſh people and unwiſe, do you thus requite the Lord? Hath he intruſted you with ſo rich a Talent, that you might hide it in a Napkin? Hath he planted you by the waters of his own Sanctuary, that you might be as a barren land, in which there is no water? Hath he thus cauſed the Sun-beams of Mercy, and *Sion*'s ſilver drops to fall upon you, that your Souls might be like the Mountains of *Gilboa* for hardneſs, ſterility, and unfruitfulneſs, whereupon no dew falleth? Hath the Lord, in a word, born ſo long with you, that ſtill you might be as a barren fig-tree, good for nothing but to cumber the ground, and reproach his Goſpel? Oh, How is it that you do not conſider, that you will not underſtand, that every tree in God's vineyard, not bringing forth good fruit, ſhall be hewen down, and caſt into the fire? *Matth.* 3. 10.

2. *This eſpecially doth reprove all thoſe, who are ſo far from being reformed and made fruitful in good works, by the means of Grace under which they live, that they are ſtill profane, ungodly, full of all unrighteouſneſs.* And certainly, if ſuch as hide their Lord's Talent in a napkin, are blame-worthy, then much more ſuch as embezel it!

If

If ſuch as receive the Grace of God, in vain, are to be reproved; then much more, all ſuch as turn the Grace of God into wantonneſs.

If ſuch, in a word, as bring forth no good fruit, are ſo ſharply to be cenſured; then much more, are all thoſe to be condemned, that bring forth nothing but evil fruit; *Whoſe Vine is the Vine of* Sodom; *whoſe Grapes are Grapes of Gall; and all whoſe cluſters are bitter*! Deut. 32. 32.

Oh, how great is the number of men, among us, who in words profeſs, that they know God, but in works deny him; who have the leaves of an outward profeſſion, but their lives are wholly over-run, with the weeds of all manner of ſinful and ungodly practiſes! Such men are not Trees of the Garden, but of the Wilderneſs; their hearts are a ſoyl fruitful, for nothing, but ſin; as, for pride, drunkenneſs, malice, uncleanneſs, idolatry, ſuperſtition, and ſuch like: theſe are thoſe helliſh and bitter fruits, that their lives are filled with, *Gal.* 5. 20, 21.

Though they live at *Capernaum*, yet the ſhew of their countenance doth witneſs againſt them; and, *They declare their ſin, as* Sodom, *Iſa.* 3. 9. Though all the day long, God have been ſtretching out his hand unto them; yet ſtill they are a rebellious people, walking in the way that is not good, *Iſa.* 65. 2. Though, in a word, theſe men would be counted the children of Light, as well as others; yet woe and alas, the wickedneſs of their own hearts, hath ſo bewitched them, that they can in nothing find pleaſure, but in the *unfruitful works of darkneſs*! Epheſ. 5. 11.

But, is this, I beſeech you, becoming a people

of ſo many mercies; ſhall the goodneſs of God, that ſhould lead you to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, and amendment of life, thus be turned, through your own impenitency, into an occaſion of hardning you in wickedneſs here, and of plunging you the deeper in Hell hereafter? Hath God brought you forth in a Land of uprightneſs, that you might deal unjuſtly? Hath he daily made tenders of his Grace to you, that you might thus turn it into wantonneſs? Hath he digged about you, and pruned you, and watered you, with the pleaſant ſhowers of his Sanctuary, that your grapes might be wilde grapes, and all your cluſters bitter? Oh, the helliſh deſpair, the bloody agonies, and the everlaſting horrours that will ſhortly fill your ſouls, when all your wicked and ungodly practiſes, ſhall have no fruit, but ſhame; nor no other reward, but everlaſting death! *Rom.* 7. 5. Why then, will you ſtill have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs; allow your ſelf in ungodly practiſes; and be taſting ſtill that forbidden fruit of ſin? Know you not, That *the ground which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it*, and yet beareth nothing but the *thorns and briars* of ungodly practiſes, *is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned?* Heb. 6. 8. *Can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles?* So, comparing Works to Trees, and Rewards to Fruit, can thy ungodly practiſes ever yield thee the fruit of eternal Glory? Thy ignorance, thy ſwearing, thy drunkenneſs, thy whoredoms, and Sabbath-profanations; are theſe the ſeed-plot of Heaven? are theſe the foundation, whereupon to build thy hope for life and glory?

glory? Poor ſelf-deſtroying ſinner! knoweſt thou not, That ſuch as ſow to the fleſh, muſt of the fleſh reap corruption? That ſuch as do now, like thorns and briars, by their ungodly practiſes, cumber the ground in God's Vineyard, muſt ere long, be cut down and caſt into Hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched?

Oh then, take no longer pleaſure, in the unfruitful works of darkneſs! Why ſhould you delight, in that, which will ſhortly end in everlaſting burnings; and be turned, ere long, into the gall and wormwood of God's eternal diſpleaſure? Let ſin promiſe what it will, for the preſent; yet at laſt, it will bite like a Serpent, and ſting like a Cockatrice; expoſing your ſouls to the vengeance of Eternal fire! *Prov.* 23. 32. Who then for a moment's pleaſure, would run the hazard of everlaſting Torments, and burnings in Hell?

Look then, if you love your ſouls, beyond the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, and think what Gall and Wormwood, they will ſhortly be turned into; Oh think, to what everlaſting torments and howlings, in Hell, they will ere long expoſe you! Now, you can make a mock at ſin; now, you can roul it under your tongue, like ſome ſweet morſel; you will now be feeding upon that forbidden fruit; now, every ſinner will have his *Dalilah*, his *Herodias*, and from theſe, he will not be divorced; let the God of Heaven, let the Word of God, and his faithful Miniſters, ſay what they will to the contrary: Oh, but how dreadful will your condition ſhortly be, and how will you curſe the time, that ever you

gave way to the leaſt ſin! When, as *Jonathan* did in another caſe, you ſhall be forced every ſinner of you, to cry out, I have taſted a little honey, and now I muſt die; I have been feeding a while, with ſome ſenſual delight, upon that forbidden fruit, and now I muſt for ever be ſhut out of the Paradiſe of God; I have been feeding upon the honey of ſin, for a ſeaſon, and now I muſt die Eternally, and lie under the wrath of an angry God for ever; I have been rouling ſin under my tongue, as a ſweet morſel, refuſing to let it go; but now, woe and alas, I muſt not have ſo much as one drop of water, to cool my tongue, though ſcorched, burned, and tormented, in the flames of Hell, to all Eternity!

Thirdly, and laſtly, By way of *Exhortation*; *If the condition of all thoſe, that are unfruitful under the means of Grace, be ſo ſad and dangerous, Oh then, let us all, henceforth, give diligence, to make a due Improvement of the means we enjoy, and to be fruitful there-under.*

God hath planted us by the waters of his own Sanctuary; He hath lifted us up to Heaven, with *Capernaum*, in Goſpel-priviledges: what now remains, but that we ſtrive to make a good Improvement of all, giving diligence, to be fruitful in every good word and work, and to be filled with all the Fulneſs of God, as the Sea is full of water, & as the Stars in the firmament, are full of light?

Do we know the danger, of being barren, under the means of Grace, and yet ſhall we be ſo? Will our priviledges, if not improved, caſt us down into Hell, and ſhall we not then, labour to make a good uſe and improvement of them?

Have

Have you any greater work to do in the world, than to improve your Lord's Talent? Is there any thing, that more neerly concerns you, than that, having the means of Grace, you ſhould grow in Grace, and be filled with all the fruits of Righteouſneſs? Oh then, be prevailed with, to be like the Land of *Egypt*, bringing forth fruit by handfuls, to abound in the work of the Lord, to be fruitful in every good word and work!

1. Conſider, *This is the great end of all Goſpel-priviledges, that enjoying them, we ſhould be fruitful under them.* The clouds are appointed for watering, and making the earth fruitful; ſo, the means of Grace, for this end, that we may grow to be rich in Grace, and by a due improvement of them, be filled with all the fruits of Righteouſneſs. The Nurſe that gives milk to her child, intends its growth, and the Husband-man, that beſtows tillage and coſt upon his fields, doth it for this end, that they may be fruitful: ſo you, that enjoy the ſincere milk of the Word, if you grow not thereby; you, that have the coſt of Ordinances beſtowed upon you, and yet are not fruitful in every good work; you croſs the very end, to which God hath appointed them. And is it nothing, thus to deſtroy the very end of your Goſpel-enjoyments? Hath the Lord given you the means of Grace, to this end, that you might be fruitful, and will you ſtill be as barren Trees, without fruit? Oh, let us not be as *Pharoah*'s lean kine, which devoured the fat, and yet ſtill they were lean: ſo, let not us ſtill be devouring the means of Grace, and yet unfruitful! The Lord hath cauſed the Star of his Goſpel, a long time,

time, to ſhine amongſt you, and hath made the dew of Heaven, to drop, for divers years upon you; He hath not dealt ſo with every people, nor hath he ſhewed the like mercy, to every Congregation: Oh therefore, ſee that you anſwer the end of all this Grace, and of all this Love! Oh, make not that an occaſion of death to your ſelf, which God had appointed to nouriſh you unto life Eternal!

2. Conſider, *There is no greater matter of reproach, unto any people, than under the means of Grace, to continue barren and unreformed.* For a Tree, in Winter, to be fruitleſs, is no great wonder; but, all the Summer to continue fruitleſs, is a reproach to the Tree: ſo, in the winter of Popery, when there was no open viſion, no wonder though men were unfruitful; but, ſince the Summer of the Goſpel came in, for men to be unfruitful ſtill, is a reproach to them, that can never be wiped off.

For you, that are planted by the pure waters of God's Sanctuary; for you, that daily ſit under *Sion*'s ſilver drops, and are liſted up to Heaven in the means of Grace; for you to be barren and unfruitful, this will lay you under an everlaſting blot, this will certainly expoſe you to perpetual ſhame, and everlaſting contempt, in the world to come! That you, Sirs, for whom God hath done ſo much, and upon whom God hath beſtowed ſuch diſcriminating mercies, ſhould yet be unregenerate, and in a ſtate of nature; that you ſhould have graceleſs Hearts, and prayerleſs Families; that you, in a word, ſhould have an unfruitful and barren converſation: Oh,

this

this is full as prodigious, as for Cattel to continue lean in fat paſtures; this is full as great a reproach to you, as for one that hath great Incomes, and Revenues, to become a Beggar!

To prevent therefore the reproach of barrenneſs for the preſent, and everlaſting contempt in the world to come; Oh ſtrive to make ſuch improvement of the means of Grace, that you may be fruitful in every good word, and work!

3. Conſider, *For Men, under the means of Grace, to remain unfruitful, is a ſure ſigne that their hearts are naught. Fructus arborem indicat.* Let not that man ſay, his heart is good, whoſe life is not filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs, *Luke* 6. 44. Many there are, who promiſe themſelves much from a good heart, though they mind not Praying, and Reading, and Strictneſs, and ſo much Preciſeneſs, yet they thank God, they have as good an heart as the beſt: But will you ſee, I beſeech you, your own folly, would you count that ground good, that after all your coſt, remaines a barren ſoyl? or would you count that a good Apple-tree, which never bears you any fruit, but only cumbers the ground?

Let me tell you, my Brethren, If your lives be not holy, your hearts are yet graceleſs; you are ſtill in the gall of Bitterneſs, and in the bonds of Iniquity! Let me tell you, I ſay, and the Lord ſet it home upon your ſpirits, if, enjoying the means of Grace, your lives are not filled with thoſe fruits of Gods holy Spirit, Repentance, Faith, Temperance, Godlineſs, and the like, you are ſtill in the rank of thoſe corrupt Trees, that are nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned!

4. Con-

4. Conſider, *If, enjoying the means of Grace, you remain unfruitful, this will ſpoyl you of all comfort, and fill you with amazement and confuſion, another day.* When *Adam* was naked, he ran from the preſence of the Lord, as confounded thereat: When the ſouls of men within, are naked of Grace, and the lives of men without, are naked of the fruits of Righteouſneſs, they have then no courage, no comfort, no boldneſs, to preſent themſelves before the Lord.

Doth the Maſter ſmile, or frown, upon an unfitable ſervant? Can he that hath hid his Lords Talent in a Napkin, and made no improvement of it, come before his Lord with comfort, with aſſurance that his Lord will accept him? Doth not ſuch an one hang down the head, is he not diſconſolate, and filled with confuſion? Oh then, that when your great Lord and Maſter ſhall appear, you may have comfort, and not be confounded, give diligence to improve his Talent; let your growth, and fruitfulneſs, be anſwerable to the means afforded!

5. Conſider, *How graciouſly the Lord will ſpare you, if, enjoying the means of grace, you endeavour to improve them for growth and fruitfulneſs.* We often grieve the good Spirit of God, and abuſe his kindneſs: I, but if we have any bunches of Pomegranates to ſhew, if we bring forth any fruit to the glory of God, he will ſpare us as a man will ſpare his own Son that ſerveth him, *Mal.*3.17.

If the Laws of men ſpare for the fruit ſake, how much more will the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, ſpare thoſe, whoſe ſouls are a ſpiritual

Eſhcol,

Eſhcol, who endeavour to be filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs?

Where there is no fruit, indeed, there is nothing that ſtands between the ſoul and wrath, between the ſoul and the vengeance of Eternal fire: But, this may encourage you to be fruitful under the means of Grace, that being ſo, you are ſure to be reprieved, you are ſure of an intereſt in God's ſparing Mercy!

It's obſerved by ſome, that, had Chriſt found any fruit upon that barren Fig-tree, he would have ſpared it, but finding nothing but leaves, he pronounced it accurſed: However that be, yet ſure I am, if thou have but any buddings of Holineſs, if any fruits of Grace in thy life, the Lord will ſpare thee, He will not deſtroy thee, *Iſa.* 65. 8.

Though thou be weak in Grace, and art not ſo filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs as many others, yet being faithful to improve what thou haſt, the Lord will accept it; thou art too good a Tree to be made fuel on; and though thou have but one cluſter, yet ſpare it ſaith the Lord, for there is a bleſſing in it.

6. Conſider, *If, enjoying the means of Grace, you be fruitful under them, hereby you will glorifie God, and be an honour to his Goſpel. The fruits of Righteouſneſs, are, by Jeſus Chriſt, to the glory of God*, and an Ornament to the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 11. The Name of Chriſt, and the honour of his Goſpel, is kept up in the world, by ſouls that are fruitful under the means of Grace: Theſe are the only Perſons, that make others think well of Chriſt, and ſpeak well of his Goſpel. 'Tis the glory of a Land-

a Landlord, to have his Tenants grow rich under him; and it is a praiſe to the Husband-man, when the plants in his Orchard thrive and are fruitful: So, when we that are Tenants to the great Landlord of all the world, grow rich in Grace, when we that are planted in the Lords Vineyard do flouriſh therein, and are filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs, this is found, through Jeſus Chriſt, to the glory of God, and to the honour of his Goſpel.

Oh then, If you either tender Gods glory, or the credit of the Goſpel, give diligence to be fruitful in every good word and work!

7. Conſider, *There can be no better ſign of the truth of grace in our hearts, than under the means of grace to be fruitful, abounding in the works of the Lord.* 'Tis a ſure ſign you are not as trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots, when your lives ſhall be filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs. Fruitfulneſs differenceth a true Saint from a painted Hypocrite; an Hypocrite hath fair leaves, but *the root of the Righteous yieldeth fruit, Prov.*12.12.

As a Man differeth from a Beaſt by Reaſon; ſo a true Chriſtian from an Hypocrite by his Fruit. 'Tis fruitfulneſs that puts a difference between ſuch as are ſound, and ſuch as are hollow trees in God's vineyard.

Oh then, give diligence to improve the means of grace for growth and fruitfulneſs, Would you ever know the truth of your grace? Would you know your ſelves to be ſound, and not rotten trees in God's vineyard? Would you know your ſelves to be trees that ſhall at length be tranſla-

ted

ted into the Paradiſe of God, and, not ſuch trees as ſhall at length be cut down and caſt into the fire; then labour to be fruitful under, and to make a due improvement of, the means of grace!

For conſider the fruits of Righteouſneſs; 'Theſe are (as *Bernard* ſaid of good-Works) the 'evidences of true Grace, the ſeed of Hope, the 'ſigns of Predeſtination, and the happie preſages 'of our future Glory!

8. Conſider, *How diligent men are, having opportunities and means of enriching themſelves, to improve them.* Is it not wonderful to ſee how the Merchant ſets his wits on work, and what hazard he runs to improve his Trade? Do you not ſee how induſtrious the Husband-man is to improve his ground, and of a barren to make a fruitful land? Oh then, what a ſpur ſhould this put upon all our endeavours? What is the Merchant's Trade to that *Pearl of great price?* What is a fruitful land, to a Soul that is filled with *the fruits of Righteouſneſs?* What are the riches of this world, to the riches of grace here, and of glory in the world to come? Shall men labour to improve the means and opportunities of making themſelves rich, and ſhall not we improve the means to make our ſelves rich in grace? Shall men ſtrive to have their Grounds enriched, their Gardens and Orchards fruitful; and ſhall not we much more give diligence to get our Souls enriched with grace, and to have our lives filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs?

Oh! Why ſhould any men in the world, do more for the meat that periſheth, than we, for the meat that endures to eternal life? VVhy ſhould

ſhould any man do more to improve the dung of this world, than we to get and improve that grace, which at length ſhall be crowned with everlaſting glory?

9. Conſider, *How long the Lord hath born with you, how graciouſly he hath waited upon you; and let this make you ſtrive to be fruitful under the means of grace.* He hath come, not this three, but this twenty, thirty, forty years, ſeeking Fruit from ſome of us, and yet our barrenneſs appears; Notwithſtanding, He waits upon us to be gracious to us. And, is it nothing, that the Lord, who might have cut you down as unprofitable trees, and caſt you into hell, is ſtill pleaſed to let you grow in his vineyard? Might not the Lord have ſaid of you, as ſometime of the barren Fig-tree, Behold, this tree! This ten, this twenty years I come ſeeking Fruit on theſe Sinners, theſe unprofitable Servants, theſe barren Fig-trees, and find none, *Cut them down, why cumber they the ground?* Certainly, as the goodneſs of God ſhould lead us to Repentance; ſo his Patience ſhould effectually perſwade us to bring forth Fruit worthy of Repentance, and amendment of life! *Rom.* 2. 4.

Oh, how ſpeechleſs and confounded will you be, when God ſhall ask you, Why were you not fruitful under the means of grace? I beſtowed Talents upon you to trade with, I ſet the recompence of eternal life before you, I planted you by the waters of my Sanctuary, I gave you my Goſpel, my Spirit, my Miniſters; and to all theſe, I added much Patience, giving you time to fructifie in, after you had been, ten, twenty years

as barren Fig-trees, in my vineyard, yet I cut you not off, but waited that you might be fruitful; How is it then, that you were not so? How is it that you lived, and died unfruitful, after so much patience?

10. Consider, *If enjoying the means of grace you endeavour to be fruitful thereunder, what a Cordial this will be to your Souls, in a dying hour.* Death, like a Whirlewind, may blow down the tree of the body, but it can never blast the fruit of our graces, *Rev.* 14, 13. Those that are trees of Righteousness, they carry the fruits of Righteousness along with them, as so many death-bed Cordials. This will stay them as with Flaggons, and comfort them as with Apples of life, when they are swooning, fainting, dying, and bidding adieu to all their creature-enjoyments, to remember that their lives were filled with the fruits of Righteousness, to remember that they lived not unfruitful, but were serviceable to God in their generation! Oh, how refreshing will it be, when coming to die, a man is able to say, The Lord gave me the means of grace, and I have brought forth the fruits thereof; God made my Cup full, and I made it to run over for the relief of others; he entrusted me with one, with two, with five Talents, and, through grace, *I* hid them not in a Napkin, but have improved them to so many more!

Would you then be above the fear of Death? Would you meet with comfort in a dying hour? Oh, strive to improve such Talents as God hath entrusted you with; and see, that enjoying the means of grace, you have your fruit unto Righteousness!

11. Conſider, *If enjoying the means of grace you remain unfruitful, this will aggravate your condemnation.* The means of grace, if not duly improved for growth and fruitfulneſs, ſerve only as Torches to light men to hell; and the brighter ſuch Torches have ſhined, the hotter will Hell fire burn upon them for ever, *Luk.*12.47.

By how much the more then you have with *Capernaum* been lifted up in Goſpel-priviledges towards Heaven, ſo much the deeper, if you be not fruitful, muſt you ſink in Hell, and eternal perdition!

Let me then prevail with you to mind this duty of improving the means of grace, and that in ſuch ſort, that in every good word and work you may be fruitful. Oh, conſider what it is that I preſs you to; it's nothing, but that you would ſtudy to prevent your own deſtruction, to eſcape everlaſting burnings in hell, and not to make that which was appointed unto life, an occaſion of greater damnation to your ſelves, an occaſion of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of miſery! If the Motion be not reaſonable, reject it with ſcorn, and ſpare not: but, if there be all the Reaſon in the world for what I ſay, and your Conſciences can tell you it is ſo; then, Oh then, take heed that you live not unfruitful under the means of grace, that you be not any longer as barren trees in God's vineyard, cumbring the ground! For conſider, I beſeech you, this; no trees ſhall be more dreadfully burnt, than thoſe which are planted in God's own vineyard, and yet bear no good fruit! The means of grace, if you live and die unfruitful under them, like Oyl

and

and Pitch, will make the fire of God's wrath to burn you more terribly!

According to mens Priviledges and Talents here, if not improved, ſo ſhall be their condemnation, their torments, hereafter. You cannot be lifted up to Heaven in the means of grace, but this, in caſe you improve them not, will bring you down with *Capernaum*, to the loweſt hell!

12. And laſtly, conſider, *If enjoying the means of grace you improve them to growth and fruitfulneſs, God will ſhortly crown you with life, and eternal glory.* Being *Fruit-bearing trees* in the *Lord's vineyard*, he will not make *fuel* of you, but will tranſlate you ere long into the Paradiſe of God. The Servants that doubled their Lord's Talents by trading with them, they are called up *into the joy of their Lord*, Luk. 19. 16, 17.

Let mens lives but be filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs, and there is nothing can hinder them from eating of the Tree of Life, *which beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth its fruit every month*, Rev. 22. 2.

God is not unfaithful to forget your labour of love; and therefore if here you be fruitful in grace, he will ſee that hereafter you be crowned with glory; if here you ſow to the Spirit, he will ſee that hereafter you reap of the Spirit life everlaſting!

Shall I then, upon the account of your own everlaſting advantage, prevail with you to make a due improvement of the means of grace? Shall I perſwade you, upon the account of that life, happineſs, and eternal glory, which abides all thoſe that are fruitful, in the world to come, up-

on the account of that fulneſs of joy, and thoſe Soul-ſatisfying pleaſures that are at God's right hand for evermore; Shall I perſwade you to be fruitful in every good word and work? Oh, methinks you ſhould eaſily be intreated to provide for your own happineſs, to make ſure of life, and eternal glory upon any rates! Well, do but improve your Lord's Talent, and you ſhall enter at laſt into the joy of your Lord; Let it be your care, under the means of grace, to have *your fruit unto Righteouſneſs*, and undoubtedly, the end of that fruit ſhall be life; yea, everlaſting life in the Kingdom of Heaven! *Rom.*6.22. As ſure as here you are gracious, ſo ſure ſhall you hereafter be made glorious. As ſure as Heaven enters into your Souls in this world, ſo ſure ſhall you enter into Heaven in the world to come. As ſure as you make improvement of your Lord's Talent, ſtriving to be fruitful under the means of grace, ſo ſure ſhall you enter into the joy of our Lord!

And, do you know what a bleſſed thing it is to be crowned with everlaſting glory? Do you know how bleſſed a thing it is for a Soul to be tranſlated hence into Heaven? Do you know what a bleſſed thing it is for a Soul to be gathered to the Spirits of juſt men made perfect, for a Soul to ſit down with *Abraham?* Do you know, in a word, how bleſſed a thing it is for a Soul, after all the waves of Afflictions, and rouling billows upon which he was toſſed in the troubleſome Sea of this world, to be called up into everlaſting Communion with God; where, after our weariſome pilgrimage, we ſhall have an everlaſting glorious Reſt, beholding the ever bleſſed God without end,

praiſing

praiſing him without ever being weary, and feeding without ſatiety upon thoſe unperiſhable Soul-ſatisfying pleaſures that are at his right hand for evermore?

Poor ſhallow worms that we are, talk we may of theſe things; but are no more able to comprehend them while we dwell in theſe houſes of Clay, than to compaſs the whole Heavens with a a ſpan!

Seeing therefore, that God hath provided for all that improve their Talent, ſtriving to be fruitful under the means of grace, ſuch everlaſting glorious felicity in the world to come; How ſhould this make us carefull to improve our Lord's Talent, and give diligence under the means of grace, to be fruitful in every good word and work? Oh, let not any of us, through our own barrenneſs in God's vineyard, make our ſelves uncapable of being tranſplanted into the Paradiſe of God, the Cœleſtial *Canaan*, the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where all Fruit-bearing Vines are laden with full cluſters of richeſt Grapes, drinking their fills of freſh Fountains of glorious joyes, and everlaſting delights!

Theſe are the *Motives* that ſhould, in all reaſon, prevail with you to improve your Talents; that ſhould make you give diligence under the means of grace, to be fruitful in every good word and work: Now, that you may to your own everlaſting advantage, do ſo; obſerve and put in practiſe, I beſeech you, theſe following Directions:

1. *Be ſure that you get into Jeſus Chriſt, and be made one with him.* As the Cience muſt firſt be

grafted on the Stock, before it can bring forth Fruit: So, we muſt firſt be branches in Chriſt, united to, and made one with him, before ever we can be fruitful in good works, *John* 15. 5. The Tree muſt firſt be good, before any good Fruit can grow upon it; But now, a man cannot be good out of Chriſt; he is a corrupt Tree, and therefore ſuch muſt his Fruit be alſo, *Luke* 6. 43.

A Tree that is dead, will yield no fruit: Now, every man out of Chriſt, is like a Tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots, he hath no principle of life within him, but is ſpiritually dead, and can therefore never bring forth Fruit unto God, 1 *John* 5. 12.

Oh then, take heed that you reſt not in a Chriſtleſs condition, but get an intereſt in him, and this will make you Fruitful under the means of Grace! That man who is a branch of Chriſt the true Vine, though before, he were like a dry Rod, yet now with *Arons* Rod he bloſſoms, and brings forth Almonds.

2. *Take heed that you allow not your ſelves in any, the leaſt ſin.* If our teeth be ſet on edge by theſe Apples of *Sodom*, we cannot ſo reliſh the Fruits of Righteouſneſs as to abound therein. In ſome ſoyls, Trees will not grow; to be ſure Grace will never grow, nor thrive in a ſinful heart. Sin, lived in, is like Vermine to the Tree, deſtroying the Fruits of Righteouſneſs in ſuch a ſoul. If ever therefore you would be Trees in Gods Vineyard, filled with all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs; then, take heed of ſin, and fly from it, as from Hell it ſelf. This, if lived in, like the worm in *Jonahs* Gourd, will ſmite you till

till you wither and come to nothing.

3. *Labour to get your hearts affected with godly ſorrow for all your ſins, eſpecially that you have been ſo long unfruitful and barren, under the means of Grace.* When the plant hath been pricked, ſo that it iſſues forth Gum and Tears, the Fruit will be the more, as ſome ſay, and the ſweeter; To be ſure, the man that hath been pricked at the heart for ſin, watering the means of Grace with penitential Tears, will abound in the Fruits of Righteouſneſs.

Moiſt grounds, as your Marſhes, are uſually moſt fruitful: However, the ſoul that is ofren moyſtened, and ſteeped in the tears that flow from a broken, ſorrowful, and contrite heart, will be fruitful under the means of Grace.

The reaſon why the valleys flouriſh with Corn, is, becauſe the ſprings run there: So, where the ſprings of godly ſorrow run, there the heart bears a fruitful crop.

Leah had a tender eye, that by reaſon of its tenderneſs, was apt to water, and ſhe was fruitful: The Chriſtian that hath a tender weeping eye, will undoubtedly be fruitful in every good word, and work.

Oh then, give diligence, that you may get a tender melting frame of ſpirit, and ſee that you often accuſtome your ſelves to godly ſorrow!

Oh! what need is there that all of us ſhould be afflicted, and weep, and mourn, that our laughter ſhould be turned into mourning, and our joy into heavineſs, if for no other cauſe, yet becauſe we have been ſo unfruitful, under the means of Grace!

Do you not hear how the Husbandman complains, like the men of *Jericho*, if his field be barren? Do you not see how the Merchant droops, and hangs down the head, if his Ship miscarry, or come home empty?

And shall not we then much more complain, bow down the head, and be afflicted for our own barrenness, non-proficiency, and great unfruitfulness, under the means of Grace? That God hath planted us by the waters of his Sanctuary, and yet we continue barren, that our Talents have been so great, and our improvements so small, this is a lamentation, and must be for a lamentation to all that would ever be fruitful under the means of Grace! *Sions* mourners are alwaies the most thriving Christians: they reap in Grace and Joy, while others whose hearts are impenitent, reap in sin and eternal wrath!

4. And lastly, *Be every way nothing in your own eyes, striving alwayes to keep an humble and lowly frame of spirit.* 'Tis observed in some Countries, as in *France*, that the best and largest grapes, which they make their Wine of, grow upon the lower sort of Vines: Sure I am, the best and fairest Fruits of the Spirit, do grow upon the humble and lowly Christian, *Jam.* 4. *God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* The low Valleys are covered with Corn, while the high towring Mountains are barren and unfruitful: So, while men of a proud and lofty spirit, are barren of all goodness, the humble and lowly Christian, is filled with the Fruits of Righteousness.

Be sure then, whatever you do to suppress all

proud

proud and over-weaning thoughts of your ſelves, and to walk humbly with God. Many might have made a good improvement of their Lord's Talent, and been fruitful in Grace, if they had not conceited themſelves to be ſo. The only way then to be fruitful under the means of Grace, is to have low thoughts of your ſelves, and to keep humble, whatever your priviledges, and attainments are. 'Of all ſouls, humble ſouls, 'do moſt prize the means of Grace; of all ſouls 'they are moſt fearful of loſing the means of 'Grace; and will therefore of all others, be moſt 'careful to improve the means for growth, and 'fruitfulneſs. Oh then, though you be lifted up never ſo high in your priviledges, yet be ſure that you walk humbly and lowly, that ſo you may not with *Capernaum* be brought down to Hell for your barrenneſs, but that you may improve thoſe Talents with which you are intruſted, abound in the work of the Lord, *have your Fruit unto Holineſs, and the end of that Fruit, everlaſting Life*!

FINIS.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

Rom. 5. 5.

And hope maketh not ashamed.

OUr blessed Apostle, having at large asserted, in the foregoing Chapters, the Doctrine of Justification, not by *Inherent*, but by *Imputed* Righteousness; He comes in this Chapter, to speak of some of those blessed Effects, that are resultant from it, and consequent to it.

Amongst many, that might have been mentioned, our Apostle insisteth upon two of the glorious Effects, accrewing from his Justification to every Believer; namely, Peace with God, and Hope of Glory.

1. The former of these Effects, that is, *Peace with God*, he declares by another efficient Cause, telling us, that we have it through our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone, by the sacrifice of Himself, hath reconciled us to God. This benefit of Reconciliation, with the God of Heaven, he amplifies by instituting a Collation betwixt it and another benefit of as great Concernment, which is Faith in Christ, by which we have access into the

the fore-mentioned Grace of Reconciliation. For, were we not juſtified by Faith, in the ſight of God, we could never have Peace with him; our Juſtification before God, being that which uſhers in our Reconciliation with him.

2. The latter of theſe Effects, that is, *The hope which Believers have of the glory of God*, and all other good things, the Apoſtle amplifies, by the wonderful operation thereof, in the hearts of God's people; telling us, that, ſo great and certain is that Hope, that it makes them rejoyce in conſideration of their future glory, as if they were already poſſeſſed of it. This rejoycing of God's people, in hope of their future glory, he further amplifies, by that which is more to be admired, namely, that they are able to rejoyce in the greateſt tribulations; and, *Not only ſo*, ſaith he, *but we glory in tribulation.* Yet, leſt it ſhould be thought, that God's people rejoyced in that which was evil and deſtructive to themſelves, he gives us the Reaſon, why they ſo rejoyce; namely, becauſe by thoſe afflictions, which befal them, the Lord ſtrengthens their hope, and confirms them, in expectation of their future glory. Which he proves by this *Sorites*: *Affliction*, ſaith he, *worketh patience*; *patience*, *experience*; *and experience*, *hope*; therefore, affliction worketh Hope.

This done, he returns to Hope, evincing the certainty thereof, in the words of my Text, from a glorious effect of it, which is, not to make thoſe aſhamed that have it. For, ſaith he, *Hope maketh not aſhamed.*

Thus I have given you the coherence of the words, and brought you through the Suburbs of the

the Context, into the glorious City of the Text it ſelf: wherein, you may obſerve theſe two Particulars.

1. The ſubject, *Hope.*

2. The predicate, *maketh not aſhamed.*

1. For the ſubject, *Hope*] The word admits of various acceptations; upon the explaining whereof, we may not now ſo much as touch, muchleſs, go about to exſpatiate. Onely thus much, you may take notice of, that ſometime it is taken for the object, or thing hoped for; and ſo the Apoſtle tells us, that *hope which is ſeen, is not hope*, Rom. 8. 24. The meaning is, That the object of Hope, when once it is ſeen & enjoyed, ceaſeth thence-forward, to be hoped for. For, how can he hope for Life, Happineſs, and eternal Glory, who is already poſſeſſed of them? Hope, is not of that which is ſeen and enjoyed, but of that which is abſent and inviſible.

But, ſometime the word is taken, for the affection or grace of Hope, whereby a Soul doth ſtedfaſtly expect, and with patience wait upon God in Chriſt, for the accompliſhment of all thoſe future good things, whether relating to life or godlineſs, which the Lord hath promiſed, and faith believeth, as poſſible, though difficult to be obtained; and that is the acceptation of the word, in this place.

2. For the predicate, *Maketh not aſhamed*] Οὐ καταισχύνει: There is a *Meioſis* in the words, which though they be uttered negatively, muſt yet be underſtood of a poſitive effect, attributed in this place, to a Chriſtian's Hope, as implying, that it's never diſappointed, but doth always yield

yield matter of glory, enabling a man to rejoyce in the greateſt tribulation, and to count it his Crown.

From the words of my Text, thus explained, you may obſerve with Me, this point of Doctrine.

Doct. *That the Hope which a Chriſtian hath, will never make him aſhamed.* Perplexed, a Chriſtian may be, but, not in deſpair; reproached, but, not aſhamed; yea, he may be perſecuted, to the very death, but yet, he can never be confounded, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 10.

The hope of a Righteous man, ſhall be turned into gladneſs; but, into ſhame, it ſhall never be turned, *Prov.* 10. 28.

To have a man's Hope, turned into ſhame, were the greateſt miſery; but, he that truſteth in the God of *Jacob*, and whoſe hope the Lord is, is pronounced bleſſed, *Pſal.* 146. 5. *Jer.* 17. 7.

Many men preſume of mercy from the Lord, and promiſe themſelves glory with the God of *Jacob*, who ſhall at length be expoſed to everlaſting ſhame, and perpetual contempt: but thoſe, who place their whole affiance in the Lord, continually waiting upon him, in the way of his Judgments, for all things appertaining to life and godlineſs, for grace to make them more holy here, and for glory hereafter to make them everlaſtingly happy, *ſhall never be aſhamed*; they ſhall never be confounded, *Rom.* 9. 33.

In the proſecution of this *Doctrine*, we purpoſe, by Divine Aſſiſtance, to give you the *Reaſons*, evincing the truth of it; and from thence, to paſs to the *practical Improvement* of it, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt,

First, For the *Reaſons*, evincing the truth of this *Doctrine*, *That a Chriſtian's hope will never make him aſhamed*; you may take, amongſt many, theſe that follow.

1. *Becauſe the hope, which every true Chriſtian hath, is nothing, but what the Lord himſelf hath wrought in him, by his holy Spirit.* A Chriſtian's Hope, is not a moral virtue, acquired by cuſtom, and frequent actions, but a gracious habit infuſed into him, by the Spirit of God, who is the ſole Author, and efficient Cauſe of it, as being a flower, that never grew in nature's Garden.

The original and pedigree of a Chriſtian's Hope, is from God alone, who is therefore often called the God of Hope; not only objectively, becauſe we ought to place our whole affiance in him, but alſo effectively, becauſe he works it in us, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.*

So then, you ſee, 'tis the work of God, to beget us to a lively hope; we are of our ſelves, no more able to hope for Heaven and glory, together with the good things conducing thereto, than we are to purchaſe them: The Lord, therefore, gives us an eye to hope, as well as an hand to believe; and when this eye grows dim, he clears it by the anointing of his own Spirit, that we may hope to the end.

And can we think, that a God, ſo infinitely kind and gracious, as the Lord is, will be the Author of confuſion to his own people, working hope in them, by his holy Spirit, to put them to ſhame? How

How then, can the Lord chooſe but be good to them, that wait for him; to them, that place their whole hope and affiance in him? *Lam.* 3. 25.

2. *Becauſe, as the Lord is the Author, ſo he is the Object of a Chriſtian's hope.* If indeed, we ſhould anchor, and anchor on the waves; if we ſhould build, and build upon the ſands, we might miſcarry: but, building upon ſo ſure a Foundation, anchoring upon ſo ſure a Rock, as the Lord *Jehovah*; impoſſible it is, that we ſhould ever miſcarry, and be aſhamed of our Hope.

Men may fail us, and be men, becauſe they are ſubject to change, and many times, unable to do what they purpoſed: but now, the Lord cannot fail us, and be God, if we place our whole hope and affiance in him, it being impoſſible, that the Divine Majeſty, ſhould be ſubject to mutability, or weakneſs.

The Lord, in many places, is called, The *God of Hope*; and thoſe, that place their whole hope and affiance in the Lord, are every where, in holy Writ, pronounced, *Happy*; and all this, to let us underſtand, that ſuch as make God, the Object of their Hope, ſhall never be aſhamed, *Pſal.* 146. 5.

To hope in the creature, will be matter of ſhame, and everlaſting reproach; but, thoſe that hope in God, their Creator, have anchored upon ſuch an immoveable Rock, that all the powers of Hell and Darkneſs, can never ſhame them. *For, with the Lord* Jehovah, *there is everlaſting ſtrength,* Iſa. 26. 4. If a Chriſtian's extremities, were above the reliefs of God, he might ſoon be aſhamed of his Hope: but, infinite Power, and infinite Love, can never be non-pluſt!

3. *Be-*

3. *Becauſe, a Chriſtians hope, is nothing, but what Chriſt hath purchaſed for him, his death being the only meritorious cauſe thereof. Omne donum gratiæ Dei in Chriſto eſt.* As every good gift comes down to us from the Father of Lights; ſo, through the merits of the Sun of Righteouſneſs: Jeſus Chriſt, by his own death, hath purchaſed our Hope; not only, objectively, but formally conſidered; not only, the Object, as Glory, and all other good things, which a Chriſtian hopes for; but, alſo the grace of Hope, whereby he ſtedfaſtly expects, and patiently waits for them.

A Chriſtian's Hope, is laid in blood; not in his own blood, but in the blood of Chriſt. 'Tis Chriſt crucified, that is the ground of our Hope; by his Death, he purchaſed Salvation, and, by his Reſurrection from death, *we are begotten to a lively hope, that we may wait for the purchaſed poſſeſſion*, 1 Pet. 1. 3.

Now, can we think, that Chriſt ſhed his blood, to purchaſe ſhame for his own People, for his own Spouſe; nay, for the Members of his own Body? Did he come from Heaven, to Earth; from Earth, to the Croſs; from the Croſs, to the Grave; to beget us to a lively hope, when yet we were enemies; and having brought us by his own Death, into an eſtate of friendſhip, will he make us aſhamed of our Hope?

4. *Becauſe it is built upon the Word and Promiſes of God, which can never fail.* The Word and Promiſes of God, ſupport and bear up the hoping and waiting Soul, as the pillars bear up the Houſe upon which it ſtands; theſe are like the Cities of Refuge, appointed by *Moſes*, to which, the

the purſued Malefactour betook himſelf; to theſe doth the guilty believing ſoul, purſued with the ſenſe of Gods diſpleaſure, the noiſe of ſin, and cry of his own conſcience, betake himſelf, hoping, and ſtedfaſtly expecting conſolation from them.

For, theſe promiſes give us an intereſt in God, together withall other good things, whereupon ariſeth *Hope, that can never make aſhamed, Tit.* 1. 2.

The ground upon which we may hope for Eternal life, and all other good things, is Gods promiſe, and therefore hoping for them upon that account we can never be aſhamed, becauſe God that cannot lye hath promiſed them; he cannot break his word, he cannot deny himſelf, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth.

5. *Becauſe, a Chriſtians hope never leaveth him, but, in the worſt of conditions, abides with him.* If a Chriſtian ſit in *darkneſs*, yet he hopes for *light*. If he *fall*, yet he hopes to *riſe again*, *Micah.* 7. 8. If he be afflicted *over night*, yet he hopes for joy *in the morning*, *Pſal.* 30. 5. If he be *impriſoned*, yet he hopes for *enlargement*, *Zech.* 9. 12. *Turn ye*, ſaith the Prophet, *to the ſtrong Hold, ye priſoners of hope*, ſpeaking to the *Jews*, who at that time were held priſoners in *Babylon*, and clearly implying, God's people, in their greateſt ſtraights, have hope of deliverance. If, in a word, a Chriſtian be on his death bed, his ſtrength decaying, his Phyſitians diſpairing, his Friends weeping, and all hopes of life taken away, yet his hope in God is not taken away. For, ſaith the wiſe man, *The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs, but the*

Righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. 14.32.

True hope is of a perſevering nature; it's an Adamantine grace, that neither fainteth, nor is broken by affliction. The hope of a Chriſtian forſakes him not, but ſtays with him in the worſt of conditions, and therefore it can never make him aſhamed.

6. *Becauſe it riſeth from a Chriſtians own experience, and is bottomed thereupon.* 'Tis our Apoſtle's aſſertion, that *Experience worketh Hope, and that Hope*, which is thus bred and nouriſhed by experience, *maketh not aſhamed.*

When men are over-credulous to truſt, and place their hope in thoſe of whom they never had experience, this often ends in ſhame: But now, a Chriſtian hath daily many ſignal experiences of God's favour towards him, and ſuch experience breeds Hope, of which he can never be aſhamed.

When a Chriſtian was yet dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, the Lord then had compaſſion upon him, tranſlating him out of a ſtate of Nature, into a ſtate of Grace.

When his ſins and temptations have been ſtrong, God hath come in with Auxiliary forces, and his Grace hath been ſufficient for him.

When, in a word, his heart hath been dead in duty, the ſpirit of God hath ſweetly tuned his ſoul, and, ſo, enabled him to make melody in his heart to the Lord, *Epheſ.* 5. 19.

Now, ſurely that Hope muſt needs ſtand ſtrong and never make aſhamed, which is bred and nouriſhed by a Chriſtians own experience. For the experience that Believers have of God's former

former Mercies, is a ſure ground whereupon to hope in him for future favours, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. The Apoſtle from that experience he had had of God's goodneſs in ſaving him from former troubles, was encouraged to hope in God for deliverance from future calamities.

And ſo *David*, *The Lord*, ſaith he, *who delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and from the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this uncircumciſed* Philiſtine; giving us plainly to underſtand thus much, that every daring *Goliah*, ſhould be lookt upon as vanquiſht already, when we can but remember a vanquiſhed Lyon, and a Bear, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37.

Hath God begun a good work in thee? This is ſufficient ground for thee, to hope that He will alſo finiſh it? Hath he delivered thee out of former dangers? Good reaſon haſt thou to hope that he will alſo prevent future miſeries. Hath he hitherto, in a word, been gracious to thee, ſubduing thy enemies under thee, and giving thee his Grace; the more cauſe haſt thou to hope that he will ſtill deal bountifully with thee, making thee more than a Conquerour through Chriſt over Death, Hell, and all the powers of Darkneſs, that he may crown thee with glory!

7. *Becauſe, it gives him tranquillity of ſpirit, aſſuring him of the love of God, together with an intereſt in his ſpecial favour.* This reaſon is hinted by our Apoſtle himſelf, *hope maketh not aſhamed*; Becauſe, ſaith he, *The love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, which is given to us.* The love of God here ſpoken of, and given, by our Apoſtle, as the reaſon, why hope

maketh not aſhamed, is not to be underſtood paſſively, but actively, not the love whereby we love God, but the love whereby God loves us, and of which we get daily experience by hoping in him. Now, as we find it in other caſes, Relying upon the love of One, who both can, and is willing to help us, affords a great calm, and ſome ſecret joy, to a mind otherwiſe diſturbed and perplexed: So, hope waiting upon God, and ſtedfaſtly expecting from him, upon the account of his love towards us, all good things, doth wonderfully quiet a Chriſtians heart, making him many times to rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory; and how then can we once have a thought, that this ſhould make him aſhamed?

By hope, a Chriſtian experienceth the love of God, and all his attributes, as ſo many cryſtal ſtreams to refreſh him, as ſo many beams of the glorious Sun to warm him, as ſo many precious cordials to comfort him, and as ſo many Cities of refuge to ſhelter him from every avenger of blood, ſo that he may glory in his hope, but can never be aſhamed of it.

8. *Becauſe, his hope is the genuine off-ſpring of a lively faith, and is builded upon it,* Heb. 11. 1. The Apoſtle there, calls Faith ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, *the ſubſtance,* and the very foundation *of things hoped for*; giving us thereby to underſtand, that Faith as the cauſe goes before Hope, and Hope as the effect follows Faith, and that the ſtedfaſtneſs of Hope is from the certainty of Faith.

Faith, depends upon the word of promiſe,

Hope

Hope depends upon the word of Faith, waiting patiently for the full accompliſhment of what Faith believeth.

Fides intuetur verbum rei, Spes vero rem verbi. Faith hath reſpect to the Word of God promiſing, but Hope to that which the Word promiſeth. God, as the firſt Truth, is that which Faith leans on; but God, as the chief Good, is that which Hope looks after: Faith looks at the certainty of the promiſe, but hope at the excellency of what is promiſed. Faith diſcovers the treaſure, and Hope gathers it, and lays it up. Faith, in a word, ſhews a Believer the Land of Promiſe, and Hope ſails thither with patience. So that, Hope having reference to, and being thus firmly bottomed upon, a lively Faith; it cannot but keep the ſoul ſteady, and preſerve it from ſhame.

9. *Becauſe, a Chriſtians hope ſupports his ſpirit, not ſuffering him to ſink or deſpond, under any affliction.* A Chriſtian can counter-ballance what he feels, with what he expects; he feels many times nothing ſave trouble and diſtreſs, but that which he expects is Life and Glory. A Chriſtians hope, is like a cork that keeps his ſoul above the water of afflictions, not ſuffering him to be overwhelmed with them. Hope is called a *Door*; while a Chriſtian can keep this Door of hope open, he will not ſink under the ſoreſt burden, *Hoſ.* 2. 15.

What the Ark was to *Noah*, when the world was overflowed with an univerſal deluge; what the Whale was to *Jonah*, when caſt over-board, that is a Chriſtian's hope, even a ſure Sanctuary

in dangers, and times of tryal.

Such is the nature of a Chriſtians hope, that it infuſeth an Heroick ſpirit, and derives ſtrength into him, making him not only to bear, but to glory in ſuffering, *Rom.* 5. 3.

Now then, that which bears up a mans ſpirit, thus giving him an undaunted courage under all afflictions; ſo that he can, not only undergo them, but glory in them, can never make him aſhamed.

10. And laſtly; Because, *a Chriſtians hope is never diſappointed, but ſhall at length be crowned with, and turned into the full and immediate fruition of the thing hoped for.* Betwixt a Chriſtians hope, and the object thereof, there is a certain connexion: He hath little in hand, but he hath much in hope; his preſent poſſeſſions are but ſmall, but what he hath in expectation is exceeding glorious, neither ſhall he ever be diſappointed, or fall ſhort of it. For the preſent, a Chriſtian is *ſowing in tears*, but, according to his hope, he ſhall *reap in joy*, *Pſal.* 126. 5.

Now, he goes mourning all the day, but, according to his hope, he ſhall ſhortly be comforted, *Mat.* 5. 4. Now, he is ſurrounded with many grievous afflictions, and is daily drinking of the bitter waters of *Marah*; but, at the great Feaſt, the water of his afflictions ſhall, according to his hope, be turned into the Wine of everlaſting conſolation. Now, he is forced to deny himſelf and take up his croſs daily; but hereafter, according to his hope, he ſhall wear the crown, and, having ſuffered for Chriſt, be glorified together with him, *Rom.* 8. 17. Now, in a word, he in wandering in the barren Wilderneſs of a perſecuting

perſecuting world; but yet ere long, he ſhall, according to his hope, be poſſeſt of the Land of Promiſe, arrive at the Haven of Happineſs, and be landed in the Region of Eternal glory, where he ſhall ſee the beauties, taſte the pleaſures, and enjoy the priviledges of the cœleſtial *Canaan*, the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*. For, the hope of God's People can never be fruſtrated, nor ſhall it ever end, but in the endleſs fruition of himſelf in glory, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17, 18.

A Chriſtian can never loſe his hope, till he have found all that he hoped for: nor can his hope ever be deſtroyed by diſappointment, though at length it ſhall be perfected by enjoyment, and ſwallowed up in the full fruition of eternal glory. So that a Chriſtian's hope, and the object thereof, being thus inſeparably knit together, we may well conclude, that it will never make him aſhamed. For, can that which leads to glory, be the cauſe of ſhame? Or, Can we imagine confuſion to ariſe out of the full fruition of Eternal, Soul-ſatisfying, and Glorious felicity? We may find ſhame, indeed, following the total diſappointment of hope; but, that ſhame ſhould follow the full accompliſhment of an hope ſo glorious as a Chriſtian's hope, is utterly impoſſible.

Secondly, Having thus proved, come we now to the *Improvement* of the *Doctrine*, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*:

And it may be uſeful, for { *Information.* / *Examination.* / *Exhortation.* } And,

Firſt, By way of *Information*: *This clearly*

gives us to understand, that the hope of many will make them ashamed, and that their present expectation will but breed their everlasting confusion. For, though such as are Christians indeed, shall never be ashamed of their hope; yet the hope of many professing themselves Christians, will make them ashamed, because their hope was not truly Christian, and of the right stamp. Let us Instance in some Particulars.

1. *Such will be ashamed of their hope, who build it upon their Christian profession, and External privileges.* *Micah* had great hopes that God would bless him, when he had gotten a Levite to his Priest, though still he continued an Idolater: So, many there are, who promise themselves great matters, and presume of no less than eternal glory; because they have the Gospel amongst them, hear the Word preached, receive the Sacrament, and are called Christians, though they live in all manner of prophaneness.

But what an absurd thing is it for a man thus to build his hope upon an empty Profession? Will a Husband delight himself in his Wife, because she calls him her Husband, living all the while in Adultery with Strangers? Will the King honour a man for professing him to be his King, if in the mean while he cease not to plot Treason, and act Rebellion against him? So, will Christ take pleasure in a man, & promote him to glory, who, notwithstanding that he calls him his Husband and his King, is yet committing Fornication with the world, plotting spiritual Treason, and acting open Rebellion against him? How fond were that man that should imagine such a thing?

And,

And, how certainly will that Hope, which is built upon an empty Profeſſion, expoſe you to ſhame, and everlaſting confuſion!

As Chriſt curſed the barren fig-tree which had Leaves, but no Fruit: So will he curſe them that have the Leaves of a Chriſtian Profeſſion, but want the Fruit of an Holy Converſation, *Matth.* 21. 19.

2. *Such as build their hope upon their good meanings, will at length be aſhamed of it.* Every man is apt to pretend a good Intention for the worſt of Actions; and thereby think to waſh himſelf clean from all guilt, as though he could turn black into white, and evill into good: But this is a ſandy Foundation to build upon, it being impoſſible that our good Intention, if our works be evil, ſhould ever exempt us from ſhame, and everlaſting confuſion.

Whatever a man's Intentions be, yet, if his Actions be not regular, God will abhor him, and all his good meanings.

Saul had a good Intention in ſparing the beſt of the *Amalekites* Cattel for Sacrifice; yet *Samuel* charges him with Rebellion for his labour, 1 *Sam.* 15. 22, 23.

And ſo *Uzzah*, no doubt, had a good meaning in ſtaying the Ark of God that it ſhould not fall; and yet for all that, how ſignally did the Lord manifeſt his diſpleaſure againſt him, ſtriking him dead in the place? 1 *Chron.* 13. 9, 10.

Do not then fly to thy good Intentions, pretending, that whatever thou doſt or ſpeakeſt, yet thou meaneſt no body no hurt; for, if thy Actings cannot be warranted by God's Word, they will

will never be able to bear up thy hope, they will never endure the fiery tryal, but will ſhortly prove matter of ſhame, and everlaſting reproach to thee!

3. *Such will be aſhamed of their hope as build it upon their outward proſperity in the world; thinking they are heirs of Heaven, becauſe they are poſſeſſours of the Earth; and promiſing themſelves eternal comforts, becauſe God hath given them ſome creature-enjoyments.* But alas, a man may enjoy a great portion of this preſent world, and yet be everlaſtingly miſerable in the world to come. Thus we find it was with rich *Dives*, who, notwithſtanding that he fared deliciouſly on Earth, is now tormented in Hell, *Luk.*16.19,23.

It's no new thing to ſee the Wicked proſper, whilſt the Righteous are afflicted, and in miſery; to ſee a juſt *Abel* ſlain for his piety, whilſt an ungodly *Cain* lives and builds Cities; to ſee a righteous *Paul* converted, whilſt an unjuſt *Felix* ſits in Judgment upon him; to ſee, in a word, God's own People in want, whilſt the Lord fills their belly with his hidden treaſure, who are daily treaſuring up wrath for themſelves, againſt the day of wrath, *Pſal.*17.14.

Why then will you place your hope in a thing of nought, and ſet your hearts upon that which is not? Do your Riches argue God's love to be towards you for the preſent? Or, Can they deliver your Souls from the wrath to come? Oh, how ſpeechleſs and confounded will you be another day, when all your worldly enjoyments which you look upon as an argument of your good condition, encouraging your ſelves from them,

them, to hope for a future happineſs, ſhall be brought in againſt you as ſo many aggravations of your eternal miſery!

4. *Such will be aſhamed of their hope, as build it upon nothing but their ſuperſtitious Obſervances.* No light diſcovers the Heavens, but that which ſhineth from Heaven: So, there is no Doctrine that ſhewes forth God, and the way to Heaven, but only that which God himſelf hath given from Heaven. Of all other Doctrines, and Obſervations, we may ſay as ſometime *Job* did of his Friends, They are *Phyſitians of no value.* They can neither diſcover, nor cure the diſeaſe of the Soul. Nay, inſtead of healing they wound, inſtead of miniſtring freedom they make a man a ſlave; and, inſtead of ſaving, they deſtroy the Soul.

How vain then are thoſe amongſt us, who receive for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, promiſing themſelves the favour of God, while they are offering Sacrifice with ſtrange fire, and hoping to come to Heaven in a way of their own deviſing!

Such men, like the fooliſh man in the Parable, leave *the Rock, and build upon the Sands*; they go from the *living Fountain to broken Ciſterns, in which there is no water*; They run from the Sun, ſeeking light in a Glow-worm; they forſake, in a word, the firm Pillars of God's own Inſtitutions, and lean upon the broken Reeds of their own Inventions, which will pierce, and wound them, to their great and everlaſting confuſion! *Iſa.* 1.29.

But, why will you thus ſeek the living among the dead? Why will you ſeek for Life and Salvation

tion in your own Inventions, and ſuperſtitious Obſervances? As *Peter* ſometime ſaid to Chriſt, *Lord, Whither ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of Eternal Life:* So (Brethren) let me ſay to you, Whither will you go? On what Rock will you build? To whom will you ſeek? What guide will you have, to direct you in all your Worſhip, if not the Scriptures, wherein are contained the words of Eternal Life? *Joh.6.68.*

If all your Religion, be not Scripture-Religion, and all your Worſhip, ſuch as God hath required; what ever coſt you have been at about it, will be utterly loſt, *Mat.* 15. 9.

Oh, how will your Hope be turned into ſhame, and your preſent expectations into everlaſting confuſion, when all your Religious Devotions, that had not the Word of God commanding it, ſhall be pronounced abomination, and the Lord, to your great aſtoniſhment, ſhall then ask you, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?* Iſa.1.12.

5. *Such will be aſhamed of their hope, as build it upon their not being ſo bad as many in the world are.* This was the deceit and flattery of the Phariſee; *I thank God,* ſaith he, *I am not as others are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, nor as this* Publican, *Luk.* 18. Thus, many there are amongſt us, who comparing themſelves, with ſuch as are worſe than themſelves, do thereupon conclude, their condition to be happy. But, this is, as if a man ſhould perſwade himſelf, he is rich, though indeed he have nothing, becauſe he is not indebted ſo many thouſand pounds as ſome are; or, as if a man deſperately ſick, ſhould yet promiſe himſelf life, becauſe he is not ſick of the Peſtilence.

My

My Brethren, men die not all of one ſickneſs; ſome have more peſtilential Diſeaſes, than others, yet all die; ſo, the wages of every ſin, is death, *Rom.* 6. 23.

Not only great Rivers fall into the Sea, but little brooks alſo: ſo, little ſins, as well as great ones, will carry you, without repentance, down the dead Sea of God's wrath, into Hell and Eternal Perdition, which will greatly aggravate your eternal Miſery! Others, for their drunkenneſs, go to Hell; but thou, for a vain thought, muſt be damned for ever!

It is not he, my Brethren, who is not ſo bad as others; but, he that is a new creature in Chriſt, who hath the aſſured hope of eternal Life; and you, that are otherwiſe minded, will ere long, be aſhamed of your hopes; and what ever expectations you may have upon this account, that you are not ſo bad as others; yet ſhortly, they will turn to your everlaſting confuſion!

6. And laſtly; *All thoſe will be aſhamed of their hope, who preſume they may be ſecurely ſinful, becauſe God is merciful, and that they may ſtill run on upon God's ſcore, becauſe Chriſt hath given himſelf a ranſom.* Thus, many turn the Grace of God into wantonneſs, and harden themſelves by that which ſhould lead them to repentance, turning their phyſick into poyſon, and the means of their ſalvation, into an occaſion of their own everlaſting deſtruction. Oh, how many poor ſinners, pluck death from the Tree of Life, and through preſumption, go to Hell by the ladder of Chriſt's blood, whereby others go to Heaven!

And, what is this, but, as if a man ſhould give him-

himſelf many mortal wounds, becauſe there is a Chirurgion that can cure him, of whoſe help he hath yet no promiſe?

God's mercies, and the merits of Chriſt, miniſter pardon to none, but ſuch as turn from iniquity; neither can they truly comfort thee, if they do not firſt humble thee.

Do not then, Oh, do not Spider-like, ſuck damnation out of the ſweet flower of God's mercy, nor make Jeſus Chriſt, through preſumtion, who came into the world to ſave ſinners, the occaſion of your own deſtruction!

You ſay, God is merciful, and Chriſt died for ſinners; but, ſurely, it was for returning, and not for rebellious ſinners; for mourning, and not for impenitent ſinners! *Iſa.* 55. 7.

Oh then, do not hope your ſelves into Hell; take heed, that you be not damned upon a miſtake!

There is hope indeed, of mercy with God, through the blood of Chriſt, if you will but break off your ſins by repentance: but, if otherwiſe you look for mercy, your hope, will ere long, be turned into ſhame, and your preſumption will but pave the way to your eternal confuſion!

God's ordinary way with ſinners, is to fit them for the comforts of *Sion*, by the terrors of mount *Sinai*; for the bleſſings of *Gerizzim*, by the curſes of mount *Ebal*; for the ſpirit of Adoption, by the ſpirit of Bondage; for the hope of eternal Glory, by the fear of Hell and everlaſting Miſery!

Secondly, By way of *Examination*; *Let us now bring our ſelves to the Touch-ſtone, and prove our hope, whether or no, it be truly Chriſtian, whether it have*

the

the right ſtamp upon it, whether it be ſuch an hope, as will never make us aſhamed? Come almoſt to any man, and he will tell you, he hopes to be ſaved: Oh, but let us not put Heaven and Glory, upon ſo deſperate an adventure! It neerly concerns us all, to make a ſtrict inquiry into the nature of our hope, and to read, as it were, an Anatomy-Lecture upon our own hearts, that we be not at length aſhamed of our own confidence, and diſappointed in our expectations, finding our ſelves to be caſt down to Hell, inſtead of being exalted to heavenly glory.

I ſhall therefore, to undeceive you, lay down ſome diſcriminating Notes; and accordingly, let it be your care, to put your hope upon a ſtrict Teſt, as in the preſence of God.

8. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, is uſhered in by godly Sorrow.* Where ever the Spirit of God is, it is a Spirit of Adoption, enabling the Soul to hope in God, it is firſt a ſpirit of Compunction, cauſing the Soul to weep bitterly, that ever it offended God.

Men muſt firſt deſpair of happineſs in themſelves, before they will accept of it, and wait for it upon God alone, *Acts 9. 6.* As the launcing of a Wound, goes before the Cure; ſo, repentance for ſin, before hope of mercy.

That is a true Sun-ſhine of hope, which comes after a ſhower of tears; and truly, we may as well expect a crop without Seed, as the comfort of hope, without ſorrow for ſin.

Have you, therefore, ever yet taſted of the bitter waters of *Marah*? have you been convinced of,

of, and deeply humbled for, all your ſins? Well, remember, That hope, which ſprings not out of your ſhame and ſorrow for ſin, cannot chooſe but make you aſhamed. For, it's impoſſible, that you ſhould ever enter into the Paradiſe of true hope any other way, than through the valley of tears.

2. *That hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, is a quickening hope.* Hope of Victory makes the Souldier fight, and hope of Gain makes the Merchant endure ſo many ſtorms: So, that hope, which will never make aſhamed, is as wind to the Sails, and as wheels to the Chariot, making a Chriſtian active in Religion, and with gladneſs run the way of God's Commandments; it ſets a man aworking for Heaven; it's a ſpur to duty, and a whet-ſtone to induſtry, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3.

Hope, is *circa arduum*, it cuts a way through the hardeſt Rock, and it wreſtles with the greateſt difficulties; it makes a man deſpiſe dangers, and march on undauntedly in the face of death.

He that hath that hope, which is truly Chriſtian, will have Chriſt, though it be in a Furnace, and go on in a way of Duty, whatever it coſt him; and that hope is adulterate, which enables not thus far, and will certainly end in ſhame at the laſt.

Oh then, What pains do you take, in proſecution of your hope? Can that man ſay, he hath hope of Heaven, where he ſhall be crowned with a garland of Glory that never fadeth, who ſtands idle all the day?

There is a faint Velleity in Hypocrites; they would

would be ſaved, but yet they ſit ſtill, and do nothing, their hope is not a lively, but a dead hope. If the Kingdom of Heaven would be taken without violence, their hope would put them in poſſeſſion of it; but, if they muſt work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling, their hope is not ſtrong enough to put them upon ſuch a Province. Well, but true hope is in the ſoul, like fire, which being an active element, is ever ſparkling and burning.

That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, will never give over, till it be poſſeſſed of the thing hoped for.

3. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, will diſcover it ſelf, by occaſioning many ſerious and delightful thoughts about the thing hoped for.* Thoughts are the ſpyes and meſſengers of Hope, which it ſends into the holy Land, to bring the ſoul glad tydings thence. Impoſſible it is, that he, who lives in the hope of eternal glory, ſhould not be frequently thinking of it, by this means anticipating the contentment of what he expects, and feaſting his ſoul with the thoughts of that glorious Inheritance, as if it were already preſent.

What then, I beſeech you, is that, where upon in your thoughts, you moſt delightfully dwell?

You ſay, you hope for Heaven and Glory at laſt; well, have you many joyful and ſerious thoughts about it, delighting therein, as in the Treaſure, where you find all riches, as in the Paradiſe, where you meet with all comforts, and as in the Ark, which bears up your ſpirits, in every deluge?

Thy hope is a bubble, a fancy, a dream, that will ſhame thee for ever, if it make thee not dwell much in thy thoughts, with delight, upon what thou hopeſt for!

4. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, doth alienate the heart from all creature-enjoyments, and makes a man fix it upon heavenly Objects*, Phil. 2. 20. He that hath the hope of Heaven in his heart, cannot chooſe, but leave the earth out of his heart, and live in Heaven; and whoſoever looks for a Saviour from Heaven, will be ſure to have his Converſation in Heaven.

Are therefore your affections crucified to this preſent world; and are your hearts diſingaged from it? though you live in the world, yet do you live above it; and do you prize an heavenly Reverſion, before all your earthly Poſſeſſions? Is Heaven in thy eye? is Chriſt in thy heart, and the world under thy feet?

5. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, it ſets us awork to purifie our ſelves*, 1 John 3. 3. This hope, makes a man look for a pure and holy, as well as a glorious and bleſſed, eſtate; and therefore, he cannot but begin to purifie himſelf.

Hope, is in the Soul, as Lightning in the Air, that purifies and clears it.

He that hath Heaven in his heart, cannot chooſe, but have Heaven in his life: Hope, is of a Cœleſtial nature, though it do not wholly remove ſin, yet, it ſubdues it; though it doth not keep ſin out, yet it keeps it under; in a word, though it do not perfectly free a man from every

ſpot

ſpot or ſtain, that ſin hath left upon his ſoul, yet, it makes him daily to be *cleanſing himſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

Try therefore, I beſeech you, your own hope, and bring it to this touch-ſtone; doth it put you upon the purifying of your ſelves, and make you labour to be holy, as Chriſt is holy? Art thou an unclean perſon, and yet doſt thou hope to go to Heaven, when there is *nothing which is defiling, that can enter therein*? Rev. 21. 27.

Art thou an unregenerate, profane, ungodly perſon, and yet doſt thou hope to go to Heaven, when, *except a man be born again, he can never ſee the Kingdom of God*? John 3. 3.

Oh, why will you reſt upon that hope, which will end in ſhame, and wilfully preſume your ſelves into endleſs miſery?

Deceive not your ſelves, I beſeech you; he that ſaith, he hopes to be ſaved, and yet labours not to be ſanctified, doth but dream, inſtead of hoping. For, whoſoever truly waits for heaven and glory, waits for them in the way of holineſs.

6. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, can arm a man with patience, under all afflictions.* He that hath the moſt aſſured hope of good things from God, is moſt able to quiet himſelf in the will of God; and, that hope which a man hath, of enjoying future comforts, doth exceedingly mitigate his preſent ſorrows, *Rom.* 8. 25.

Do you therefore find, the wine of the Spirit, through hope, ſweetening to you the waters of *Marah*?

Can you gather grapes of thorns, and fetch ho-

ney out of the Lion's carcaſe? Are you able to rejoyce in tribulation; at leaſt, have you thus far attained, that when God puts the cup of affliction into your hand, you can quietly ſay, not my will, but thine be done?

7. *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, will not ſuffer a man to hearken to any temptation, nor to give way to the leaſt ſinful compliance, for the greateſt advantage.* Thus the three Children, by the ſtrength of hope, and knowing, that the Lord could deliver them, marched undauntedly in the face of death; neither could the ſound of the Muſick allure them, nor the heat of the Furnace affright them, *Dan.* 3. 17.

Thus *Moſes* likewiſe gave evidence of the ſoundneſs of his hope, while he *chooſe rather to ſuffer affliction, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt, greater riches, than the treaſures of* Egypt, *Heb.* 11.24,26.

Thus, in a word, the Apoſtle tells us of many bleſſed Martyrs, who approved their hopes to be truly Chriſtian, and of the right ſtamp, while they refuſed to accept of deliverance upon baſe terms, *that they might obtain the better reſurrection, which they hoped for*, Heb. 11. 35.

Now examine, I beſeech you, your ſelves, upon the point, and bring your hope to the touch-ſtone; doth it make you to refuſe preferment upon baſe terms, and keep you from all ſinful compliances, how advantagious and profitable ſoever they might be?

Babylon's fornications, are uſually preſented in a golden cup; but, doth your hope preſerve you from

from accepting thereof, ſetting Heaven againſt Earth, and the pleaſures at God's right hand, againſt the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon?

8. And laſtly; *That hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, doth breed in the heart earneſt pantings, and breathings, and deſires, after what we hope for*, Rom. 8. 23. Such as by hope have got a taſte of the cluſters of *Canaan*, cannot but long for more, deſiring to be poſſeſſed of that holy Land. They now rejoyce in hope of the glory of God, and that makes them ſo earneſtly long to be glorified with God, where all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes, and their water of ſorrow, be turned into the wine of everlaſting Conſolation. Now, in a word, they have their ſins ſubdued, that they cannot reign over them, but they long (from that experience) the more exceedingly, to get to Heaven, where their ſins ſhall be utterly aboliſhed, that they may not remain in them.

Now then, do you pant after glory, honour, and immortality? longing to be there moſt of all, where it's like to be with you beſt of all?

As the Mother of *Siſera*, looked out at a window, and cried through the latteſs, *Why is his Chariot ſo long in coming, and why tarry the wheels of his Chariots*? So, Do your hearts earneſtly pant after heavenly glory, that your winter may be over, and your ſummer once come; that you may have no more luſts to grapple with, nor no more ſins to trouble you; that, in a word, you may be above a proud, earthly, dead heart, and made perfect in holineſs?

Thirdly, By way of *Exhortation*; *This Doctrine, beſpeaks both Saints, and Sinners, both thoſe who have, and thoſe who have not that hope, which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed.*

Firſt. *For you, who upon a through examination, and by comparing your ſelves with the Rule, find that you have that hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed*; *My Exhortation to you, is, that you ſtrive to maintain your hope, againſt all diſcouragements.* As you ought to keep Faith in continual acting: So, you muſt alſo ſtrive to keep the grace of hope on foot, often ſetting your ſouls a looking for Eternal life.

It's an undervaluing thoſe glorious things which God hath provided for us, not to ſtrengthen and maintain the hope of them in our ſouls.

A Souldier that hath gotten the higher ground, will not let the Enemy beat him off it, but will keep it to the laſt breath: So, if God hath ſet you on the higher ground, and raiſed your hope as high as Heaven, oh, let not the World, let not the Fleſh, let not the Devil beat you off your ground, but labour to hold faſt the confidence of your hope to the end.

1. Conſider, *A Chriſtian holding faſt the confidence of his hope is armed againſt all dangers.* The grace of hope, is the beſt Life-guard; it ſets a Chriſtian out of Gunſhot; however, it bears off, as an Helmet, the ſtrokes that would otherwiſe prove mortal, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 8. Strengthen then, and hold faſt your hope of Eternal life, as you would the Helmet upon your head, were you to fight for your life. If once, Chriſtians, you ſuffer the hope which you have, to die, and maintain

tain it not, you lay your ſelves open to a thouſand hazards!

2. Conſider, *While a Chriſtian holds faſt the confidence of his hope, endeavouring to maintain that, he is able to rejoyce in Tribulation.* The grace of hope is able to make us not only to bear, but alſo to *rejoyce in ſuffering*, *Rom.* 5. 3.

Oh then, if as Birds of Paradiſe, you would ſing in Winter; if in time of Tribulation, you would be ſupported; if, in a word, you would be able to ſtand it out againſt the fiery Tryal, and to rejoyce in the flames, as in a bed of Roſes, be ſure that you daily ſtrengthen and maintain your hope!

This will not only leighten, but ſweeten the croſs, as that which leads to a crown.

3. Conſider, *A Chriſtian, holding faſt the confidence of his hope, cannot chuſe but be frequent and active, in every duty.* The ſoul is very apt to tire and grow lazy in duties: And, if once hope faileth, endeavours will be ſure to fail too. The heart cannot ſink, but the hands will hang down: And, where the one gives over believing and hoping, the other will ſoon give over acting and working in a way of obedience, *Heb.*12.12.

Would you not therefore be weary in well-doing, but have ſtrength iſſued forth into your ſouls for every duty, that you may always abound in the work of the Lord? See then, that you nouriſh your hope continually, maintaining that againſt all diſcouragements.

Faith makes us living, but hope will make us lively. What the wings are to the Birds, what the oyl to the Lamp, what weights to the Clock,

that is hope to the ſoul, ſetting all the Chariot-wheels thereof a going in a way of obedience. Oh Chriſtian, thou wilt never be rid of ſloth-fulneſs, nor active in duties, till thou ſtrengthen thy hope. Believe it, Chriſtians, there is no ſuch remedy to cure your ſlothfulneſs, and procure you activity of ſpirit, as Hope. This will let you ſee that the leſs you receive here, the more you ſhall receive hereafter.

4. And laſtly; Conſider, A *Chriſtian, holding faſt the confidence of his hope, is fixed, and cannot poſſibly be removed from his own ſtedfaſtneſs, by any temptation.* The hope which a Chriſtian hath, is compared to an Anchor, ſure and ſtedfaſt, that, in the ſtormy guſts of temptation, ſtays the ſoul, and though tempeſts ariſe, yet, keeps it from floating, and daſhing againſt Rocks, *Heb.6.19.*

Hearts, not eſtabliſhed by hope, will be unſettled; and eaſily face about to the riſing ſide, be it what it will: But now, hope carries the heart to God as the center, and there it reſts, as finding a ſufficiency of grace, and all needful ſupplies in him.

Though, a Chriſtian can meet with no Anchorage below, yet, hope ſhews him enough above; Though there be nothing but weakneſs below, yet, ſaith hope, there is ſtrength above; Though the ſprings below are dry, and the treaſures ſpent; yet, ſaith hope, there are fountains above, and ſuch treaſures of Mercy and Power, as can never be expended. Hereupon, the ſoul cleaves to God, and let come what changes will, yet, the ſoul is ſettled, as a Ship at Anchor.

Oh then, if you would not be toſſed to and fro,

fro, and at length removed from your own ſtedfaſtneſs, be ſure that you ſtrengthen and maintain your hopes. The Marriners above all things, will be careful to keep the Anchor, that may ſave both Ship, and Goods. Well, hope is the Anchor that muſt keep the Ship of your ſoul from wrack.

Without this, you will run a-ground, and ſplit your ſelf at every Rock of temptation: But having fixed this Anchor, your ſouls will ſail ſafely, in the moſt violent ſtorms, and ſteer a right courſe to the haven of Eternal reſt!

1. *If you would ſtrengthen and maintain your hope, ſee that you ſtrengthen Faith, and be much in the actings thereof.* *Abraham* had a vigourous lively faith, and he *againſt hope, believed in hope*; againſt the hope of ſenſe, Faith made him hope in the promiſe, *Rom.* 4. 18.

The more active your faith is in applying, the more confident will your hope be, in waiting for the comforts of the Goſpel.

Hope, is the flame of Faith; the more you add therefore to the fuel of your faith, the greater will be the flame of your hope.

2. *Remember the days of old, and ſee that you often call to mind your former experiences.* As tribulation worketh experience, ſo experience of Gods former Mercies, will beget hope in him, for future favours. As life is maintained by food; ſo hope which is the life of the ſoul, by feeding upon its own experiences.

Oh then, call to mind your Experiences, this will ſtrengthen your hope in God for future favours. *David* could not but look upon a daring *Goliah*,

Goliah, as vanquiſht already, when he remembred the vanquiſhed Lyon, and the Bear.

Nor could *Paul* ceaſe from hoping in God for future deliverance, conſidering how graciouſly the Lord had delivered him out of former and preſent dangers, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10.

Experiences of Gods goodneſs towards us, are glimpſes of Heaven; and they will, if called to mind, exceedingly ſtrengthen our hope, of that glorious Inheritance!

Secondly, For you, that after due examination find your ſelves yet deſtitute of that hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed; My Exhortation to you, is, *That you content not your ſelves to live as men without hope, but that you labour to get it.* A hopeleſs condition, who would reſt in it? There is no man I confeſs, but hath ſome kind of hope: But, that hope which is not truly Chriſtian, is but like a Spider's web, that is eaſily ſwept down.

In time of proſperity, wicked men are alwaies confident; but in time of diſtreſs, they often deſpond, and uſually, before their life is cut off, their hope is cut off; how then, ſhould you labour for that hope, which will never make aſhamed?

1. Conſider, *There is yet mercy for you that are miſerable, and a ground of hope, for you that are yet in a hopeleſs condition.* Satan uſually extenuates ſin when he comes to tempt, that we may preſume: but having faſtened his temptations upon us, he will aggravate it, that he may drive us to deſpair. But conſider, you that lie groaning under the guilt of ſin, as though it would never

be

be pardoned, how many and great ſoever your ſins have been, yet there is hope in *Iſrael* for you, if, breaking off your ſins by Repentance, you will but lay hold upon it.

The Lord ſhews mercy to thouſands, and why mayſt not thou be one of a thouſand? Though formerly thou haſt been a great ſinner, yet if now thou beeſt a penitent ſinner, there is a golden Scepter of Mercy held forth to thee, and the Lord calls thee by Name to lay hold upon it, *Matth.* 11. 28.

Oh then delight no longer in your own miſery, why ſhould you look upon your own condition as deſperate, when God counts it not ſo! There is the ſame reaſon through Faith in the Blood of Chriſt, why we ſhould hope for the pardon of the greateſt, as well as of the leaſt ſin; great and ſmall ſins are all one to infinite Mercy, through an infinite Merit; He that pardons the one, can as eaſily forgive the other.

2. Conſider, *There is no condition more ſad and deplorable, than a hopeleſs condition.* Ten thouſand words cannot ſpeak a man more miſerable, than to ſay, He is a man *without hope in the world*, *Epheſ.* 2. 12.

A man that is without hope, Oh, what will he do when he comes to die, when Judgment overtakes him? Like a man Arreſted for Debt, he hath no Surety; his Wounds bleed, and he hath no Phyſitian; he is like a Ship in a Tempeſt, ſickneſs begins to make a tempeſt in his body, and ſin to make a tempeſt in his Conſcience, and he hath no where to put in for Harbour; he ſees the fire of God's wrath approaching, and hath no skreen to keep it off. Oh,

Oh, the terrour and anguiſh of every man that wants that hope which is truly Chriſtian, at the hour of death, and day of Judgement! How little, alas, are all the comforts in the world to a man that dies without hope? He looks upon his Friends, but they cannot comfort him; bring him his bags of Gold, and they do but afflict him; tell him of the choiſeſt of his creature-comforts, and they are all but as ſongs to an heavy heart. For why, he lived without hope, and now dies deſpairing; and receives in himſelf the ſentence of everlaſting ſeparation from God, and the glory of his preſence!

If therefore, when Death ſhall ſeize upon you, and Judgement overtake you, you would not be found as men without hope; then labour now for that hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed!

Firſt, *That hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, is a fruit of Regeneration; give diligence therefore to be born again.* You can never have any true hope of thoſe things that are above, if you be not born again from above. God firſt works Grace, and then Hope; and, to be ſure, a graceleſs condition, is an hopeleſs condition.

Secondly, *That hope which is truly Chriſtian, and will never make aſhamed, is the effect of an Intereſt in Chriſt through Faith.* Till we receive Jeſus Chriſt by Faith, making him our Hope, the Hope of Salvation is none of ours. For, whoever is Chriſtleſs, is pronounced by the Apoſtle, to be yet in a Hopeleſs and loſt condition, *Epheſ.* 2. 12.

FINIS.

SERMON VII.

Rev. 2. 10.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

EVery thing (ſaith the Proverb) is well, that ends well; and the end of every thing is that which either makes or marrs all. That therefore we ought to make our principal care, ſhould be this; That *having begun in the Spirit, we may not end in the Fleſh; that having ſet our hand to God's Plough, we look no more back*; but that we labour to hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith, ſtriving to perſevere in grace till death, that we may then, according to my Text, receive from Chriſt *a crown of life.*

The words of my Text, expreſs the ſum of Chriſt's Advice to the *Presbytery* of the Church in *Smyrna*; together with all the Members of that Church; being now ſurrounded, through the malice of Satan, with many grievous Afflictions.

Behold! *The Devil* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon that ye may be tryed; and ye ſhall*

ſhall have Tribulation ten dayes: But for their Encouragement as well as Direction; and that they might know, that after their Incarceration ſhould follow their Enlargement and Coronation; that after their ſuffering for Chriſt, they ſhould be glorified together with him, He ſaith, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

In which words you may obſerve theſe two Parts, as the principal Branches thereof:
- A *Precept*, ſhewing us our Work.
- A *Promiſe*, holding out our Reward.

1. The *Precept* laid down by way of Command and Injunction for our Direction, you have in theſe words, *Be thou faithful unto death.*

2. The *Promiſe* laid down by way of Motive and Encouragement for our Conſolation, you have in theſe words, *And I will give thee a crown of life.*

In the *Precept*, we may obſerve:

1. The Duty required, and that is Faithfulneſs, keeping cloſe to God, and perſevering in all upright and dutiful obedience to his Commandments, with what difficulties ſoever attended, *Be thou faithful.*

2. The Extent of this Faithfulneſs; ſhewing how far it ought to extend it ſelf, and that's to death; *Be thou faithful unto death.*

In the *Promiſe*, we may alſo obſerve:

1. The Giver, beſtowing the Reward upon all thoſe that are thus Faithful, and that is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſtyled in the Inſcription of this Epiſtle,

Epiſtle, *The firſt and the laſt, who was dead and is alive*; For, He it is that hath ſaid, *I will give thee.*

2. The Reward it ſelf, beſtowed by Jeſus Chriſt, upon all ſuch as are faithful unto death; and that's a crown of life, even eternity of happineſs, and ſoul-ſatisfying felicity in God's Heavenly Kingdom; *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

The words being thus Analytically explained, I ſhall wind up the full ſenſe of them, in this one *doctrinal Propoſition*, which you may take as followeth.

Doct. *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, will reward, with a crown of Life, all thoſe that are faithful unto death.* Whoſoever is faithful to the end, ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt in the End, *Mat.* 10. 22, 24. *Non incipienti, ſed perficienti dabitur corona.* The crown is alwayes ſet upon the head of Perſeverance; all thoſe that perſevere in grace till death, will Chriſt undoubtedly crown with glory after death.

Jeſus Chriſt will never ſuffer thoſe to go unrewarded, after death, who have been faithful to him, and ſtedfaſt in a way of obedience, all their life.

For, ſaith Chriſt, *To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne; even as I alſo overcame, and am ſate down with my Father in his Throne*, Rev. 3. 21.

Many there are, who, not perſevering in grace till death, ſhall never be able to enter into Life, how fair ſoever they might ſeem to put for it: *But to all thoſe, who by patient continuance in well doing*

doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality, the Lord will certainly render Eternal Life, Rom. 2. 7.

In the proſecution of this *Doctrine*, having premiſed ſomething for the clearing of it, we ſhall give you the *Reaſons*, proving the truth thereof, and ſo come to the *practical Improvement* of it, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

1. By way of *Caution*; *Let it be remembred that the connexion betwixt being faithful to Death, and the crown of Life, here promiſed, doth neither ſuppoſe, nor imply, the poſſibility of a Believer's falling from grace received.* The Doctrine of the Saints perſeverance is much oppoſed, I confeſs, by many; but, the earth is never the more unſetled, becauſe to vertiginous and giddy brains, it ſeems to turn round; nor doth it at all incommodate this truth, that we find the Apoſtle exhorting thoſe *that ſtand, To take heed leſt they fall*; and our bleſſed Lord, in my Text, promiſing a crown of Life, but with this proviſo, That *we be faithful unto Death.*

For, the truth is (though indeed the *Arminians* infer the clean contrary) by theſe admonitions, conditionate promiſes, and other means of grace, God's people, are enabled to continue in well doing, to be ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, to hold faſt the profeſſion of their faith, and ſo to perſevere in grace, till they come to glory.

2. By way of *Caution*; *Let it alſo be remembred, that faithfulneſs unto Death, required in my Text, is not meritorious of the crown of Life therein promiſed.* This Crown, is the gift of Chriſt's free grace, not the purchaſe of our own merits; it's freely given by Chriſt, not purchaſed of us, by ought that we can do.

There

There is, indeed, a ſpice of Popery in every man's heart, by nature; how prone are men to idolize their Duties, and to draw ſo much from the ſtream, as to forget the Spring; how prone to look upon grace, as meritorious of glory, and to be grafting happineſs, upon the ſtock of their own righteouſneſs!

But alas, How vaſt is the diſproportion betwixt our being faithful unto Death, and that crown of Life, that abides us in another world! What is our Faith, our Love, our patient continuance in well-doing, to an eternity of glory, and ſoul-ſatisfying felicity! Though we cannot obtain this crown unleſs we be faithful, yet not becauſe we are faithful. *Munera ſua coronat Deus, non merita tua.* God crowns his own gifts, not our merits; and to be ſure He will ſo crown them, that He himſelf will be no loſer; though thoſe that are faithful unto death, ſhall have the comfort of this crown of life, yet God will have all the glory which He never could have, were this crown beſtowed not of grace, but in a way of merit.

Theſe things premiſed; the *Reaſons* evincing the Truth of the *Doctrine*, are theſe:

1. *Becauſe this is that which the Lord intended them, and hath accordingly prepared for them from the foundation of the world*, Matth. 25. 34. This heavenly Kingdom, this crown of Life, this eternal weight of Glory; it's nothing but what the Lord hath from all Eternity, in the contrivances of his Love, prepared for all thoſe that are faithful unto death; unleſs, therefore, we could imagine it a thing poſſible for the only

wiſe God to reſcind his Decrees, they muſt needs be at length made partakers of all this; their faithfulneſs till death, muſt needs be rewarded with a crown of life.

2. *Becauſe this crown of life is nothing but what Chriſt hath purchaſed with his own blood, for all ſuch as are faithful unto death.* Chriſt's hanging upon the Croſs, was to bring us to the crown; He humbled himſelf unto death, to impetrate for all the faithful this crown of life, *Heb.* 10. 19. Chriſt alone, without any demerit of his, ſuffered our pain, that we, without any merit of ours, might obtain his glory; the price which Chriſt paid was his, but the inheritance of that heavenly Kingdom thereby purchaſed, he intended for us: In a word, the wreath of Thorns upon his head was his, but the crown of Life hath he purchaſed for all that are faithful unto death, and will therefore undoubtedly crown them at laſt therewith.

3. *Becauſe this is a good argument of their ſincerity, and doth clearly evince the truth of their grace, which is alwayes rewarded with a crown of glory,* Pſal. 37. 37. Falſe grace is alwayes declining, till it be wholly loſt; but true grace goes from a mornings dawning, to a noon-day brightneſs, ſhining more and more to the perfect day. Falſe grace is but for a ſeaſon; but true grace hath Eternity ſtampt upon it. True grace is not like a Leaſe which ſoon exſpires, as the *Pelagians* would make it; to day a Believer, to morrow an Unbeliever; to day Juſtified, to morrow Unjuſtified; to day a member of Chriſt, to morrow a limb of Satan; to day an heir of Heaven, to

morrow

morrow a child of Hell; this would be like a Leaſe ſoon run out: But, the Lord ſettles grace on thoſe that have it as an Inheritance, and he will ſee that the Entail ſhall never be cut off.

You may loſe (Chriſtians) your Eſtates, your Liberty, your Friends, and your Lives alſo: But as for your Grace, if it be true, and of the right ſtamp, this you can never loſe; your perſeverance in grace, it argues the truth of your grace, and that entitles you to the crown of glory.

4. And laſtly, *Becauſe to all ſuch is the promiſe of a crown of life made, and to them it belongeth.* To ſuch as, with *Paul, ſhall have fought a good fight, have finiſhed their courſe, and kept the faith, the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath promiſed a crown of Righteouſneſs at that day*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. God hath promiſed, that *thoſe who endure to the end, they ſhall be ſaved.*

Paul alſo ſpeaking of thoſe, *who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality*; tells us, that God will render to all ſuch, *Eternal life*, Rom. 2. 7.

And ſo, if you ſearch the Bible from the one end thereof to the other, you ſhall ſtill find the Lord in his Promiſes, ſetting the crown of Life upon the head of Perſeverance, and advancing all thoſe that perſevere in Grace to eternity of glory.

Now all God's Promiſes will undoubtedly at length be turned into glorious Performances. As therefore the crown of Life is theirs by promiſe who are faithful unto death, ſo this Promiſe will at length put them into the full poſſeſſi-

on of that Crown; the Lord having too much Truth to lye, too much Conſtancy to repent, and too much Goodneſs to deceive thoſe that are faithful to himſelf.

So then, the decree of God ordaining you to a crown of Life, the blood of Chriſt purchaſing it for you, the ſincerity of your grace entitling you thereto, through the Covenant of Grace, and the Promiſe of God, who cannot lye, whereby it ſtands aſcertained to you; all theſe do clearly evince, that being faithful unto Death, Jeſus Chriſt will undoubtedly reward you with a crown of Life.

Thus having conciſely proved, come we now to the *practical Improvement* of this *Doctrine*, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, By way of *Information*; This *Doctrine* may ſerve to acquaint us with theſe following particulars.

1. *How many in the world, are like to fall ſhort of this crown of Life. Non currenti, ſed Vincenti dabitur corona.* Look over the whole Bible, and you ſhall find, this Crown is never ſet, but upon the head of Perſeverance; the promiſe of a crown of Life, concerns no more, but thoſe that are faithful unto death; and how ſmall is the number of ſuch Profeſſors?

If this crown of Life might be compaſſed by Apoſtacy, by making ſhipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience, not a few would be ſure to have a ſhare in it, that are now never like to obtain it; but, if thoſe only, who continue ſtedfaſt in well doing, who hold faſt the profeſſion of their Faith, who do ſtill keep cloſe to God, and

are

are faithful till death, may expect to be rewarded with this crown of Life; then undoubtedly, without any breach of charity, we may safely judge, that multitudes will everlastingly fall short of it. For, be men never so desirous to reign, yet, if they will not be righteous; let them prize Happiness as much as they will, yet, if they despise holiness; though, in a word, they begin never so gloriously, yet, if they be not faithful unto Death, but end shamefully, they can never lay claim to this crown of Life; such have broken the condition of the Promise; no wonder then, if the Crown, bound up in the Promise, be for ever denied them!

2. *That Christianity is no unreasonable thing, no fruitless Province.* God doth not cut us out work, and deny us wages; he doth not exact duty, and give us no reward: but, as he requires that we should be holy, so he hath promised, that we shall be happy; as he hath commanded us to live with him here, as Saints on earth, so, he hath promised, that we shall reign with him hereafter, as Kings in Heaven; as he exhorts us, that we strive to be faithful unto Death so, he hath assured us, that so doing, we shall shortly be rewarded with a crown of Life! And is this now, I beseech you, an unreasonable thing? or, can you look upon Christianity still, as a fruitless employment?

When indeed, we hear of the Doctrine of Repentance, Self-denial, Mortification, and the like wholesom severities of Christianity, we are ready to be startled: but, here is that in my Doctrine, that may remove the prejudice; there is a

crown of Life, there is a Kingdom behind, that cannot be moved, and that will make amends for all.

No man can ſay, without wrong to God, that He is an hard Maſter; that crown of Life, which he hath promiſed, doth as far exceed our thoughts, as it doth ſurpaſs our deſerts; he gives double pay, there is a Kingdom that cannot be moved, there is Life and Eternity of Glory, prepared for all that are faithful unto Death.

Satan may indeed, by his wicked inſtruments, diſparage the waies of God, like thoſe Spies, that brought up an ill report of the Land of *Canaan*: but, will Satan, think you, mend your wages? I appeal to every man's Conſcience, whether to obey God, that will ſave us, be not more reaſonable, than to hearken to Satan, who only ſtudies how to deſtroy us? Chriſt bids you repent, the Devil ſaith, Time enough; but, is it not better to weep for ſin, than bleed for ſin? Chriſt commands you to pray in your Families and Cloſets, the Devil will ſuggeſt, That's too much ado: but, is it not better, that you ſhould pray here, than howl in Hell? Chriſt requires, that you ſhould ſanctifie the Sabbath, the Devil will tell you, It's a wearineſs to keep it: but, is it not better to keep an holy Reſt to the Lord, than to be for ever without reſt, and tormented in Hell, to all Eternity? Chriſt bids you be faithful unto Death, the Devil will adviſe you to ſave your ſelves: but, is not a crown of life better, than to die the ſecond Death? Is not obeying better than ſuffering? Is it not better, to be bound in all faithful obedience unto God, by cords of Love, than through un-

unfaithfulneſs, to be ſhut up in the chains of everlaſting darkneſs?

3. *That ſuch are not to be condemned, but to be juſtified, and highly commended, who are careful to hold faſt their integrity, giving all diligence, that they may be faithful unto death.* When men refuſe to accommodate themſelves to the Mode of the times, will not worſhip the riſing Sun, nor comply with every prevailing-ſide, for ſelf-advantage; but, labour to keep Faith and a good Conſcience, the world is apt to cenſure them as guilty of unneceſſary zeal, indiſcretion, and madneſs: but, Have they not a reaſon for ſuch practiſe? Is there not a cauſe why they ſhould be faithful unto Death, and are they not to be juſtified in labouring to be ſo?

Si ſervanda eſt fides, regnandi gratiâ ſervanda eſt. If for any thing a man will keep touch, and be faithful; if for any thing a man would agonize it, and double his diligence, one would think, it ſhould be for a Kingdom, for a crown of Life. Let then the blind world, count zeal madneſs, and your faithfulneſs a part of indiſcretion; yet, know, that that eternal weight of glory, that heavenly Kingdom, that immarceſcible crown of Life, that abides you in the world to come, is of worth enough to juſtifie all your zeal, circumſpection, and diligence, in purſuit thereof, though ten thouſand times more than it is. For, what is a temporal obedience to an eternal recompence? What is our ſervice on earth, to our Crown in Heaven? And who, I beſeech you, that is wiſe, and hath the ordinary reaſon of a man, would not eſcape the wrath of an angry God,

together with the torment of everlasting burnings in Hell; & withal, to obtain a crown of everlasting Life, give al diligence that he may be faithfull unto death? What scuffling and scrambling is there for Crowns and Scepters in the world? And, why should men thus labour for an *earthly crown*, which is no sooner on, but may be plucked off again? Is there not much more reason, that we should labour by patient continuance in well-doing, for an heavenly Crown, which being once obtained, shall never be taken from us?

4. *How infinitely great and glorious, God's bounty is to the sons of men.* It's an high favour, that we poor worms, and no men, are suffered to live; but, that worms should be made Kings, and, after a pardon, be crowned with everlasting Life; how great is this favour! Behold, what manner of Love is this, that for a temporal service, will give an eternal Reward; that hath promised a crown of Life, to all that are faithful unto Death! Earthly Kings may bestow great gifts upon their Favourites, but, they keep the Crown to themselves; as *Pharoah*, who, though he advanced *Joseph* to honour, yet reserved the Kingdom for himself: but God, who is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, he gives a Kingdom to all his Favourites, and crowns them with everlasting Glory!

If a King would make another man his Successor in the Throne, and bestow his Crown upon him, surely it should be one that was neer akin to him, at least, no man would adopt an enemy: But, that God should adopt us, when yet we were enemies; that he should make us Heirs to the

Crown,

Crown, when yet we were Traitors to the Crown, Oh, what ſtupendious, what aſtoniſhing Love is this!

When, my Brethren, we were like *Saul*, breathing forth enmity againſt God; when we had done God all the injury we could; when we had violated his Law, defaced his Image, and deſpiſed his Love; when, in a word, we had trampled upon his mercies, and our hearts ſtood out againſt Him, he overcame our ſtubbornneſs, by a miracle of condeſcending mercy, and not only pardoned our ſins, which deſerved death, but alſo hath promiſed to give a crown of Life!

We many times think much of a tear, of a prayer, of ſacrificing our liberty, our life, nay, our ſins, for God: but, he thinks nothing too good for us, he thinks not much to beſtow a Kingdom upon us, nor to give us a crown of Life, only with this Proviſo, that we be faithful unto Death.

This, oh this, is ſuch a miracle of Divine bounty, as we ſhall be ſearching into, and adoring to all Eternity; it's love in God to give us a crumbs, oh, but how great is that love which will give us a crown, a crown of Life, of Life everlaſting!

5. *That it is no diſgrace to be a Chriſtian, to be ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, to be faithful till death; For, upon all ſuch, there is entailed a crown of Life.* You that cannot diſſemble conſcience, and change your religion for advantage, as faſt as the Camelion her colour; You, that cannot run into the ſame exceſs of Riot, Superſtition, and Profaneneſs, but labour to hold faſt your integrity,

grity, endeavouring to ſhine as lights, in the midſt of a crooked Generation; perhaps, you may meet with ſuch as will reproach you, counting you the off-ſcouring and refuſe of all things: But remember, this is their folly: 'tis juſt as if *Shimei*, had reproached *David*, when he was going to be made King; your being Chriſtians, Chriſtians that are ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, endeavouring to be faithful unto death, this, I tell you, is your excellency, this is your glory, you are doing that which entitles you to a crown of Life!

Wiſe men meaſure things by their end; Sin ends in ſhame, but Grace in glory; Sin draws Death, and Hell, after it, but perſeverance in Grace, is always attended with a crown of Life, with eternity of glorious ſoul-ſatisfying felicity. Let not that then any longer, what ever the blind world judge of it, be counted a matter of diſgrace, which ſhall end in glory; Nor that vile and diſhonourable, which ſhall ſhortly be rewarded with a crown of Life!

6. And laſtly, *What juſt cauſe thoſe that have been faithful unto God, and ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, have to long for Death, and to rejoyce in their approaching diſſolution; For then, they ſhall be crowned with a royal Diadem.* The wicked indeed may fear Death, to them it's the King of terrours, as that which paſſeth them over to everlaſting chains of Darkneſs, and gives beginning to thoſe flames, which, tormenting them night and day, ſhall never end: But, the godly may long for Death, it will prefer them to a Kingdom; then, and not till then, ſhall they be compleatly in-

inſtalled into all their Royalties, and have the crown of Life ſet upon their heads, never to be taken off again.

If we have fought the good fight, if we have finiſhed our courſe, if we have kept the faith, hence forth there is laid up for every one of us, a crown of Righteouſneſs, 2 Tim. 4. 8.

And is not this enough to wean us, and make us willing to be gone hence? How is it then, that the godly look ſo ghaſtly at the thoughts of Death, as if they were rather going to their execution, than to their coronation? Who would not be willing to ſail in a ſtorm, if he were ſure to be crowned aſſoon as he came at ſhore?

No ſooner is he that was faithful unto Death, deprived of life temporal, but his ſoul is crowned with life Eternal!

Secondly, By way of *Reprehenſion*, this may ſerve to reprove two ſorts of men.

1. *This may ſharply reprove all thoſe who having begun in the ſpirit, are now ready to end in the fleſh, that, with* Epheſus, *forſake their firſt love, that having put their hand to Gods plough, look back again as* Lots *wife towards* Sodom; *that, in a word, having eſcaped the pollutions that are in the world, through the knowledge of Chriſt, do afterward turn away from* the holy Commandment, *ſo that their latter eſtate is worſe then the firſt,* 2 Pet. 2. 20. Oh 'tis ſad, my Brethren, for a man to come near this crown, and then to fall ſhort of it at laſt; as it is to ſee a Ship caſt away in the ſight of the Shore. Againſt all ſuch Apoſtates, the wrath of God will ſmoak, and his fury diſplay it ſelf in bloody colours. 'God hath a crown for run-

'ners,

'ners, but a curſe for run-aways: Neither doth 'he count himſelf ſerved at all, if he be not al-'ways ſerved. You look for happineſs as long 'as God hath a beeing in Heaven, and God looks 'for holineſs, as long as you have a beeing on 'Earth. Our work is never finiſhed till our lives are expired; we muſt therefore *be faithful unto death*, or we can never obtain *the crown of Life*. He that departs in the Faith, ſhall be ſaved: but he that departs from the Faith, ſhall be damned.

Look to it then, all you, who inſtead of being faithful unto God, and of perfecting holineſs in his fear, are fallen from it, declined and turned aſide after your own luſts. *If any man*, ſaith the Lord, *draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*, Heb. 10.38. 'He that draws back 'from an holy profeſſion, will undoubtedly be 'kept back from Eternal ſalvation.

'This, of all caſes, is the moſt deſperate; and, 'of all ſins, this alone is unpardonable. All 'the unrighteouſneſs of the greateſt ſinner, re-'penting and leaving his ſins, is forgiven, and 'forgotten too: But, all the righteouſneſs of the 'greateſt Saint, repenting and leaving his righ-'teouſneſs, is forgotten, but he himſelf, ſhall 'never be forgiven, *Ezek.* 18. 24.

He muſt needs fall ſhort of a crown of Life, who continues not faithful unto Death.

2. And laſtly, *This reproves all profane and ungodly perſons, who prefer the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, before the crown of Life, that endures for ever.* Oh, how much will it add to the vexation of ſuch poor ſouls in Hell, to think how fooliſhly they miſſed of Heaven, and for how

how ſmall a trifle they forfeited this crown of Life!

And yet, how many are there now that conſider not theſe things, but ſome to ſatisfie their greedy appetite drink away a Kingdom, ſome for a morſel of unjuſt gain, do not ſtick to forfeit their right to Heavenly glory, and others for a little ſenſual pleaſures, will deprive themſelves of this crown of Life. This, I know, is not your end, but it's the end of your ſinful practiſes. For a bleſſed crown, and a curſed life, a pure diadem, and an unholy converſation can never agree. Oh then, that you would now at length yet, in time, conſider your folly. Is there a crown of Life, and will you by ſin make forfeiture of this? Can the pleaſures of ſin, make amends for the loſs of ſuch a crown? Haſt thou any luſt that can countervail thy being diſappointed of Eternal glory?

Oh, look not upon the ſmiling face of ſin, but look to the end of it, *the wages of ſin is death*; it is this which will deprive you of a crown of Life. Lam. 5. 16. *The crown is fallen from our head, and woe be to us that we have ſinned!* Sin doth not only take the crown from off a ſinner's head, but it binds a curſe upon the ſinners back. The pleaſures of ſin, are ſuddenly abortive, but the pains of ſin, are eternally tormenting. Though now, you can take delight in the pleaſures of ſin, yet, you ſhould remember, it will ſhortly be like fire in your bones, and like gravel in your bowels, when it ſhall have deprived your ſouls of that crown of Life, which God hath prepared for all thoſe that are faithful unto Death. Let

the

the miſery then that attends a courſe of ſin, and thoſe everlaſting burnings in Hell, which follow after, be like a *Cherubim's* flaming Sword, to keep you from feeding upon the forbidden fruit of all unrighteouſneſs!

Thirdly, By way of *Exhortation*, let this prevail with us all, to hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith, to be ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, and faithful till Death, that we may then receive a crown of Life.

He amongſt you, that deſires to be glorious in the end, muſt labour to continue gracious to the end; and he that would ever be happy after death, muſt labour to be holy all his life. If ever then, you deſire to be crowned with everlaſting Felicity, hold faſt, and let not go your integrity.

Our labours are never fulfilled, till our lives be expired: whilſt therefore, you remain on this ſide the confines of Eternity, take heed that you never lay down the practiſe of Piety! You muſt hold Chriſtians, the Scepter of Grace in your hands, till God ſet the crown of Glory upon your heads.

And ſhall I prevail with you, to make conſcience of this great dutie? Will you cleave to God with full purpoſe of heart? May the conſideration of this crown of Life, conſtrain you to be faithful in the work of the Lord, holding faſt your integritie, whatever it coſt you, till death?

1. Conſider, *There is a Baptiſmal Vow lies upon you, obliging you thus to be faithful unto death.* In Baptiſm we took our Preſs-money, there we ſolemnly engaged our ſelves to be true to Chriſt's Intereſt,

Intereſt, and to fight it out, under his Banner, to the very death: And, how often at the Lord's Table have we taken the Oath of Allegiance to Chriſt, that we would be his Liege Servants, and that nothing ſhould ſever us from him? Now then, if we look that ever the Lord ſhould keep covenant with us, in giving us a crown of Life, let us be ſure that we keep covenant with him, in ſtriving to be faithful unto death, *Pſal.* 25. 10.

For, there is no reaſon that any man ſhould expect life from Chriſt, when he dies; that hath no care to keep faith with Chriſt while he lives.

Yea, certainly it were better for us, never to have entered into covenant with God, than to make a covenant with him, and not to keep it. For, if this Baptiſmal Vow that lies upon you be not kept inviolably, it will be puniſhed infallibly; Where doth the flying Roul of Curſes light, but upon the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly? *Zach.*5.4. If therefore our Baptiſmal Vow will not bind, yet God hath chains of everlaſting darkneſs, and thoſe ſhall!

2. Conſider, *Inconſtancy is a ſure argument of inſincerity.* True Grace is indeficient, and of an abiding nature; if therefore you be not faithful unto death, it's a ſign you were alwayes void of the life of Grace. *They went out from us* (ſaith St. *John*) *becauſe they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*, 1 Joh.2.19.

That Man's Obedience to God, was, undoubtedly, in Hypocriſie; whoſe Obedience ends in Apoſtacy from God.

Ὀυδεὶς ἐραστὴς, ὅστις οὐκ ἀεὶ φιλεῖ. *He was never*

ver a true Friend (ſaith one) *that doth ever afterward become an Enemy.* To be ſure, they were never ſincere and upright before God, who do ever give over their Loyalty to God. As therefore you would not have it at length appear to your eternal confuſion, that your beginning was Hypocritical, take heed that your end be not Apoſtatical.

Oh, there is nothing that can give you more juſt ground to queſtion the ſincerity of your grace, than your want of Perſeverance in grace received!

If ever therefore you would not be excluded eternal Life with a *Non novi vos*, as ſo many damned Hypocrites, Oh, ſee that you be *faithful unto death!*

3. Conſider, *It's the Will and Command of God, that you ſhould thus be faithful unto death.* It's no arbitrary matter, nor a thing left to our choice, whether we will be faithful till death, or no; but the living God, all whoſe commands carry Power and Soveraignty in them, He requires that we ſhould be ſo.

If then there were no other Motive to excite us, yet the command of God might be greatly provoking; He, who hath ſupream Soveraignty over all, that commands the very inanimate creatures and they obey him, He it is that commands us to be faithful unto death; How then dare we have a thought of ſtanding out againſt him?

Oh, conſider it, I beſeech you, If we obey not God, commanding us to be faithful unto death, yet we cannot chuſe but obey him, commanding us to die the Second Death! God's Will muſt either

either be fulfilled by us, or upon us; And if his commands take not hold upon us for our amendment, yet to be ſure they will take hold upon us for our confuſion, *Zach.* 1.5,6.

4. Conſider, *In caſe you be here faithful, endeavouring to hold faſt your integrity unto death; this will give you ſecurity all your life.* When dangers are eminent, all men will begin to look out for a Refuge, that they may be able to make a certain and honourable Retreat; You all deſire to be ſafe in times of trouble; if Sword or Peſtilence come, if Death lay his cold hands upon you, and Judgement overtake you, Would you not now be ſecure, and out of harm's way?

Well, there is nothing that can give you ſecurity, and ſet you out of gun-ſhot, but a care to perſevere in grace, & to hold faſt your integrity.

Would you therefore be ſecured in evil times? Then hold faſt your integrity, endeavouring to be faithful unto death.

Integrity may be ſhot at, but it can never be ſhot thorow; this is a Chriſtian's coat of Mail, he that hath it, is ſufficiently harneſſed againſt all dangers.

Oh then, (my Brethren) let Riches go, but let not your Integrity go; let Relations and Friends go, but let not your Integrity go; let Liberty, yea, and Life it ſelf go, but yet ſee that you hold faſt, and let not go your Integrity; Above all things, give diligence to be faithful to the very death!

If ſome avenger of blood ſhould be upon you, this would be like a City of Refuge; in a common Conflagration, this will be like a *Zoar* to

fly to; and when a Deluge of wrath is pouring down, in full ſtreams, upon the world of ungodly, yet this, like a *Noah*'s Ark, will afford you ſafety!

5. Conſider, *There is no other way to obtain the crown of life, but by being faithful unto death.* If you ſearch the Records of God's Holy Word, from the very beginning to the end thereof, you ſhall ſtill find, that Perſeverance in Grace till death, is that alone which carries away the crown of life, *Matth.*24.13.

Non inchoantibus, ſed perſeverantibus præmium promittitur. In the Race of Chriſtianity, not he that beginneth firſt; but he that holds out to the laſt, is crowned. It's true, we are all to ſet out for God, at our beginning; but yet, if we hold not on with God, if we endure not to the end, if we be not ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, endeavouring to be faithful unto death, we can never enjoy this crown of life.

A man can no more obtain this crown of Life without being faithful unto death, than one can get to his Journey's end, who ſits down in the midſt of his way!

Oh then, as you would not come ſhort of this crown of Life, as you would not at length miſcarry, and be diſappointed of Heaven, and Glory in the end, be ſure that you ſtrive to be faithful, to endure, to the end!

6. Conſider, *How exceeding comfortable it will be in the hour of death, to have your Conſciences bearing you witneſs, that you have been faithful all your life.* What great matter of rejoycing was it to *Paul* when he came to die, that he had his Conſcience

ſcience bearing him witneſs, *That he had fought a good fight, that he had finiſhed his courſe, that he had kept the Faith*; then he concludes, that at length he ſhould be crowned with eternal life! 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8.

And thus with comfort may every Chriſtian lay his life down, who hath laid his life wholly out in the ſervice of God. Such an one ſhall not die, but live ſtill; only he ſhall change the place of his living; inſtead of *Egypt*, to live in *Canaan*; inſtead of Earth, to live in Heaven; inſtead of a Tabernacle of clay, to live in a Manſion of eternal glory! Oh then, if in a dying hour, when neither Riches, nor Honours, nor your deareſt Relations can afford you any comfort, you would have ſomething to comfort your Souls againſt the King of Terrours; ſee then that you hold faſt your Integrity, giving diligence to be faithful unto death!

A man may repent of his Riches, Honours, and all outward Accommodations in the world: but never did any man repent when he came to die, that he had been *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord*: Never did any Chriſtian, who is going to live with Chriſt in Heaven, repent; but rejoyced, that he had been faithful to Chriſt on Earth!

7. Conſider, *How quickly this crown of Life ſhall be given you, and let that make you faithful unto death.* A man, though weary of his journey, yet, if he be within ſight of the Town where his dwelling is, puts on cheerfully; go thou, who art travelling as a Pilgrim towards the holy Land, and do likewiſe. There will ſoon, Chriſtian, be

an end of our Race; but, of our Crown there will be no end.

It's but a while, & he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry; and what, Can you not watch with Chriſt one hour? Yet a little while, and your conflict will be over, your courſe finiſhed, and your labour at an end, and will you not hold out a little longer, that at length you may lay hold of a crown of Life?

Oh, be not, I beſeech you, weary of well-doing, but ſtrive to be faithful unto Death: your time being but ſhort, it cannot therefore, be long, till, having finiſhed your courſe, Chriſt ſhall ſet upon your heads a crown of Life.

Though poſſibly, you may meet with a croſs in the way, and that exceeding ſharp, yet, comfort your ſelves with this, 'twill be but ſhort; a little draught of theſe waters of *Marah*, and the ſugar of eternal Conſolation is ready; a little ſtorm, and, being thereby wafted over into the holy Land, an eternal calm follows; a few ſighs, and groans, and tears, and then we take poſſeſſion of everlaſting Manſions of Glory, where ſorrow ſhall be no more, but all tears ſhall be wiped from our eyes.

8. Conſider, *Jeſus Chriſt perſevered for us, and therefore we ought to be faithful to him.* He was not only the beginner, but alſo the finiſher of our Salvation, *Heb.* 12. 2. He came from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to the *Croſs*, from the Croſs to the Grave, and never gave over, till he had wrought our Redemption. What then, Can we do do leſs, than, by way of gratitude, keep faith with him till death, who thus humbled himſelf to death for our ſakes?

9. Con-

9. Consider, *The former part of our life, gives way to the latter, and if our good beginnings be not closed with a good end, they will profit us nothing.* Thou hast possibly prayed, and wept, and given alms, and heard the Word, both in season, and out of season: but, all this avails thee nothing, if thou persevere not till Death, in the constant practise, of these and the like Duties of Christianity, *Ezek.* 18. 44.

The most holy and Angelical course of life, finds no acceptance with God, but is all forgotten, when we leave it off, not striving to hold on therein, till the hour of Death. It's perseverance in the wayes of Holiness, that gives us the Crown; and *patient continuance in well-doing*, to which the Promise of Eternal Life is made, *Rom.* 2. 7.

He that runs half the Race, and then faints, or turns back, loseth the Garland: so, if having put your hand to God's plough, you look back; if, having begun in the Spirit, you end in the flesh, all your praying, and repenting, and suffering, though to Martyrdom it self, is for ever lost.

To prevent, then, so bad a miscarriage, be stedfast in the work of the Lord; Oh, look to your selves, that you lose not those things which you have wrought, but that, being faithful to Death, you may receive at length a crown of Life!

10. Consider, *To begin in a way of obedience unto God, and afterward to fall off from God, not striving to be faithful unto Death, will not only prove ineffectual, for the attaining of mercy, but also most highly aggravate your eternal Misery* Those amongst us, that have been highest in Profession, if afterward they fall away, are sure to be deepest in

condemnation, *Mat.* 11. 23. There are none againſt whom the jealouſie of the Lord doth more ſmoak, than againſt thoſe, who, having ſometime ſeemed to be for him, do afterward lift up the heel againſt him.

God hath mercy for Infirmity, but none for Treachery: the more you pretended for God, the greater is the wrath he intends againſt you; your temporary obedience, is that which will expoſe you to the greateſt extremity of endleſs Miſery, if not perſevered in.

11. Conſider, *How reaſonable the Duty is, and let that conſtrain you to make conſcience of it.* God is faithful to us, and ſhould we not ſtrive to be ſo to him? The Lord himſelf, from whom we expect our reward, and the reward it ſelf which we look for at his hands, are both eternal, and ſhal never end; and ſhall we then apoſtatize, and think much to endure to the end? Shall not a crown of Life be ſufficiently cogent to make us faithful unto Death? What is there more equal, in all the world, than that they, who look to be ſaved in the end, ſhould continue to the end? What more reaſonable, than that they ſhould endeavour to be faithful unto Death, who do afterward look for a crown of Life?

12. And laſtly, Conſider *the excellency of this crown of Life, and let that make you faithful unto Death.* Not all the gold of *Ophir*, not all the Crowns in the world, are worthy to be compared with this Royal Diadem.

Other Crowns, though they be made of pure Gold, yet they are lined with cares and fears; but, this Crown is made without croſſes, it's neither

ther lined with care of keeping, nor with fear of loſing.

Other *Crowns*, are oftentimes, the mark for envy and ambition to ſhoot at: but, this *Crown* is free from envy; one Saint ſhall not emulate another; for all are crowned.

Other *Crowns* are corruptible, and death is a worm that feeds in them: but, this *Crown* is immarceſcible, it cannot be made to wither, it never fades away, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4.

Oh then, Let this conſideration be cogent with you; Is it nothing, that God ſets before you a crown of Life; is it nothing, that this *Crown* is without a croſs, that this *Crown* is above envy, and that this *Crown* is immarceſcible, that can never fade away, but endures for ever?

Oh, me thinks, conſidering the glory, the worth, and the dignity of this crown of Life, you ſhould hold faſt the profeſſion of your Faith, be ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord, and endeavour to keep your integrity, reſolving to be faithful unto Death, whatever it coſt you!

If men be ſo ambitious for an earthly, how much more ſhould you be deſirous of an heavenly *Crown*? If they, to gain a corruptible *Crown*, will violate their faith, and run themſelves upon the greateſt hazards, how much more ſhould you ſtrive to keep your Faith, for a *Crown* that is incorruptible, that gives life to him that hath it, that keeps him to Eternal Life who weareth it, that brings with it a Kingdom incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved for us in Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4.

1. *Labour for ſincerity, and be ſure that you get a principle of Life within.* Perſeverance in grace, preſuppoſes the truth of grace; and that a man may be faithful unto Death, it's neceſſary that he have within him a principle of Life.

Why, then, poor fooliſh ſinner, art thou pleaſing thy ſelf with out-ſide performances, when yet thou art dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? Can men gather *grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles*? Or, is it poſſible for thee to be faithful till Death, when yet thou art utterly devoid of the life of Grace?

Deceive not thy own ſoul, there muſt be an inward and ſaving change wrought upon thee, thou muſt firſt be raiſed from the death of ſin, to the life of Grace, and get a renewed nature, wouldſt thou ever be faithful unto Death, yea, wouldſt thou ever eſcape everlaſting Death, *John* 3. 3.

Caduca ſunt quæcunque fucata. Nothing, ſaith the *Adage*, *that is counterfeit, will laſt long.* And therefore, many ſhall fall away in times of danger, that before made a glorious Profeſſion, becauſe not inwardly ſanctified and renewed by the Holy Ghoſt; they had only a name to live, but ſtill they are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, *Rev.* 3.

This is that then, for which, above all other things, I muſt call upon you; and, ſo long as I have any Miniſterial breath to ſpend amongſt you, intreat, beſeech, and perſwade you, that you ſtrive to be regenerated, and become new creatures, that there be the truth and life of Grace within you, and that you never give reſt to your ſelves, till you be raiſed from the death of ſin, to the life Grace.

If you be not renewed men, you are undone men;

men; if you live not the life of Grace, inſtead of being faithful to Death, you are like to die the ſecond Death; if, in a word, you be not thus ſavingly changed, and born again, you can never ſee the Kingdom of God, but muſt eternally be damned!

2. *Give diligence, to get your hearts affected with godly ſorrow, and labour to be throughly humbled for all your ſins.* He that would build high, muſt lay his Foundation low: ſo, if ever you would hold out unto Death, and build as high as Heaven, you muſt be brought, by Repentance, as low as Hell. The ſeed, that had not *depth of earth*, withered and came to nothing: The reaſon why many are not faithful to Death, but fall away in time of temptation, is, becauſe they were not deeply humbled for ſin, they never felt the bitterneſs of it, and that is the reaſon, that they fear no more to commit it, *Mat.* 13. 5, 6.

The Phyſician, by opening a vein, prevents death: by the opening a vein of godly ſorrow for ſin, you will be made faithful to the Death, and that will prevent everlaſting Death. Be not then, like the ſtony ground, that wanted moiſture; but, you that have been ſinners in *Sion*, Oh, ſee now, that you be mourners in *Sion*!

We have many amongſt us, that cry out of hard times; Oh, but how few are ſenſible of hard hearts, of hearts that cannot repent and mourn for ſin?

Oh, but conſider, if God's bottle be not filled with thy tears, his Vials will be filled with wrath againſt thee, and then it will be too late to weep!

Is it not better then to have our hell here, than hereafter; is it not better to ſhed repenting tears, that will end in joy, than deſpairing tears of which there ſhall be no end?

3. *Be ſure that you engage in Religion, upon no ſiniſter accounts.* He that intends any more than Gods glory, and the obtaining of eternal Life by his Religion, will never be faithful unto Death.

And this you ſhall find, was *Judas* his caſe; his end was not pure, his eye was not ſingle, and therefore his apoſtacie was inevitable. *Jehu*, begins with zeal, as hot as fire, yet his latter end was like that of *Jeroboam*, and all this, becauſe his ends were not pure. This then is the ſum, and life of all, Be ſure to look to your ends, and conſider why it is that you ſeem religious! Is it, to be reputed of, is it to have the praiſe of men, is it to accompliſh ſome worldly deſigne? Duſt thou art, and to duſt thou wilt return; the Wolf will at length prove a wolf, for all his ſheep-cloathings; yea, the time is at hand, when with *Judas* thou wilt denie the Lord that bought thee, and ſell him for the ſmalleſt advantage. For, undoubtedly, when men take up an holy profeſſion, but not upon right ends, they will never endure to the end; thoſe that thus begin in Hypocriſie, muſt needs end in Apoſtacie!

4. *See that thou firſt ſit down, and count the coſt.* Forecaſt the worſt that may be, and then prepare for it. The want of this, is that which makes ſo many fall away, when they ſee a ſtorm ariſe, and oppoſition begin to be made, they were never minded to go any further, than might ſtand with their

their own ſafetie. There is nothing that can more diſcourage a man in his courſe, than diſappointment; When men look for eaſe, and meet with trouble; when they look for riches, and meet with povertie; when they look for libertie, and meet with impriſonment; when they look for honour, and meet with reproach; when, in a word, they look for life, and meet with death, in Heavens way, no wonder though they turn aſide!

But now, had they made a reckoning of ſuch things, they would not have counted it ſtrange, that they met with them, but would ſtill have held on their courſe for all that.

Do not then promiſe your ſelves halcion-daies, would you ever be faithful unto death, in your chriſtian courſe; but ſit down, I beſeech, and count the coſt. It may poſſiblie coſt you your Libertie, your Eſtate, your Reputation, yea, and Life it ſelf, to be faithful unto death. And can you be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all theſe; do you count them but dung, that you may win Chriſt? loſe Libertie, loſe friends, loſe Life; can you be content with all this, ſo you may finiſh your courſe with joy, give glory to God, and ſave your ſouls?

5. *Be careful to keep a good conſcience.* The myſtery of faith, can no otherwiſe be held, than in a pure conſcience; of which, if you once make Ship-wrack, you can never be faithful unto the Death, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.

If the virginity of conſcience be once violated, a man can hardly ſtand, but be ready to turn aſide at every danger. If a Ship be ſound and well

well rigged, it will ſail upon the water, but if it be full of holes, and leaks, it will ſink in the water: If conſcience have a breach made in it, a man will never be able to ſail in the waters of affliction.

An houſe will not ſtand in a ſtorm, the pillars of it being broken: If a mans conſcience be defiled, he will never ſtand in a ſtorm of Tribulation.

Oh then, be ſure that you get and keep a good conſcience; whoever you offend, offend not a well informed conſcience; what wrongs ſoever you ſuſtain, be ſure that you wrong not conſcience. Keep conſcience, and it will keep you; a good conſcience is a wall of Braſs; this will abide the fiery Tryal; this will make tormenting flames, a bed of Roſes; this, with the *Leviathan*, will make a man laugh at the ſhaking of the ſpear of every danger.

Whereas, when men once regard not the duties of a well-informed conſcience, but violate that, What an heart-quake doth every ſtorm of perſecution raiſe in them, and how eaſily do they then fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs?

A good conſcience, is a Chriſtians Feaſtival, his Muſick, his Paradiſe; ſpoil him of that, and you ſpoil him of all; This is as Oyl to the Chariot-wheels of his ſoul, without which they will move no longer in a way of obedience to Gods commandments.

So long as a Chriſtian keeps his conſcience inviolate, he ſtands inpregnable againſt all aſſaults: But, if once he let that be baffled, conſults not the purity of it, but walks contrary to the dictates

dictates thereof, the leaſt temptation is enough to remove his ſtation, and of a glorious Profeſſour, to transform him into a damned Apoſtate.

Judge then, how neerly it concerns you to hearken to the dictates of a well-informed conſcience, and above all things, to conſult the purity thereof!

If you keep not conſcience inviolate, endeavouring to do nothing againſt it all your life, you can never be faithful unto death.

6. *Let not the world have too great a ſtroak upon you, but labour to have weaned affections, to all creature-enjoyments.* They that will be faithful unto death, muſt endeavour to be ſtrangers to the world all their life; And they that would ſtill keep cloſe to God their Creatour, muſt be ſure to ſit looſe to every creature.

God allows us, indeed, the uſe of the world, but he never allowed us the love of the world: it being a thing impoſſible, that ſuch as inordinately love the world all their life, ſhould ever be faithful unto death, 1 *John* 2. 15.

A man that inordinately loves the world, will ſoon be out of love with the waies of Chriſt: Nor will any man ever be faithful to Chriſt till death, if firſt he be not dead, to all creature-enjoyments.

Oh then, let the world be as a looſe Garment, that you may throw off at your own pleaſure!

Look over all the Apoſtates, recorded in Gods holy Word, and you ſhall find them ſplitting themſelves upon this Rock. The temporary Believer falls off, becauſe of the cares of this preſent world, and the delight that he took therein, *Luke* 8. 7. This

This alſo made the young man in the Goſpel, turn his back upon Chriſt, and go away from him, though ſorrowful, becauſe he had great poſſeſſions, and an heart inordinately ſet upon them.

And why was it that *Demas*, that ſometime-glorious Profeſſour, yea and Preacher of the Goſpel, did ſo ſadly apoſtatize, but becauſe he *embraced this preſent world*, preferring the *Meat that periſheth, before the Meat that ſhall endure to eternal Life?* 2 Tim. 4. 10.

Let then the temporary Believer, let the young Man in the Goſpel, let *Demas* and *Judas*, be as ſo many Pillars of Salt to ſeaſon you, that through your inordinate love to this preſent world, you fall not at length from your own ſtedfaſtneſs, making ſhipwrack of Faith, and a good Conſcience!

What ever thy profeſſion is, whatever thy performances have been, how many, how great ſoever, yet if thou art ſeeking great things for thy ſelf, if thou love the world, and ſtand inordinately affected to theſe creature-enjoyments, never truſt thy ſelf; but know that the time may come, when for a meſs of pottagee thou wilt ſell thy birth-right, yea, and betray, for a morſel of bread, the Lord that bought thee!

7. *Give diligence, that you may experimentally know the goodneſs of Chriſt, and his wayes.* If once you have taſted that the Lord is gracious you cannot but, *as new born Babes, deſire the ſincere milk of his word, that you may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. 2. 2, 3.

The grand reaſon, why we ſee ſo many falling daily from what they once ſeemed to be, is, becauſe

cauſe they never had any experimental acquaintance with God, and the ſweetneſs of his wayes.

Labour then to experience the Goodneſs of God and his wayes, would you never Apoſtatize from them, but be faithful to death.

Let a man once taſte the ſweetneſs of Chriſt and his Merits, and he can never be a *Papiſt* in point of Merit, but will deteſt his own Works as droſs and dung in compariſon, *Phil.*3.

Let a man once get experience of God's Favour and Love through Chriſt, it will be *ſtronger than death, no water can quench it*, Cant.8.7.

Let a man, in a word, once get Experience, how bleſſed a thing it is to walk in Communion with God, and of that ſweet Peace, Tranquillity, and Soul-raviſhing Joy that attends a life of Holineſs; and this man will undoubtedly be faithful unto death: Let Temptations from within, let the World and Satan from without, ſay what they can; yet he ſtands immoveable, they do but contradict his Experience, and therefore he believes them not, but reſolves to be faithful, as having taſted himſelf that the Lord is gracious, and that *one day's Communion with Him, is better than a thouſand elſewhere*, Pſal.84.10.

8. *Be ſure that you get your hearts eſtabliſhed with Grace.* And, if a man's heart be not ſeaſoned with Grace, like a Ship without Balaſt, he is ready to be overturned with every Storm: But now, Grace hath an heart-eſtabliſhing power; what the Anchor is to the Ship, what the Foundation is to the Houſe, that is Grace to the Soul; enabling the man that hath it to be faithful till death,

death, all difficulties and discouragements to the contrary, notwithstanding.

A Christian, whose Heart is not stablished with Grace, he is not a fixed, but a falling Star; he is, as *James* calls him, ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, *A double-minded man*; to day of one mind, to morrow of another; acting *pro*, and *con*, as though he had two Souls, *Jam.* 1. 18.

Such a man is not, *ex quercu, sed ex salice factus*; not made of Oak that stands inflexible, but of Willow that will bend every way, as occasion requires.

To be sure, those men whose hearts are not stablished with grace, will be as the Times are, changing themselves, like the *Camelion*, into the likeness of every approaching object. To day you may perswade them to engage in a good Cause, and to morrow you may bring them to desert it; they will be for that Religion, not which hath the Word to guide it, but the Sword to back it; choosing not what is best, but what is safest for them.

Oh, but get your hearts established with grace, and this will so consolidate and fix them, that you will stand like *Mount* Sion, *that cannot be moved, but abideth for ever*, Psal. 125. 1. Grace carries the heart to God as the center, and there it rests, *Psal.* 116.

An heart established with grace, cleaves fast to God; so that let come what will, Prosperity or Adversity, Life or Death, the man is settled as a Ship at Anchor; he is stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord.

9. *Be serious in every Duty, taking heed of Formality.*

mality. When men accuſtome themſelves to holy Exerciſes, but never attend to the ſerious Performance of them, they do commonly miſcarry; their Formality in the Duties of God's Worſhip at laſt ending in Apoſtaſie from God himſelf.

He that dare allow himſelf in the careleſs performance of any Duty, will not ſtick at length to allow himſelf in the total omiſſion of every Duty Whenever, therfore, you go about any holy Duty, do it with all your might; be ſerious in the work of the Lord, and, in all your Religious Exerciſes, take heed of Formality.

It will be ſmall comfort at God's Bar, that you have Prayed, and Read, and heard his Word, if in all theſe you have not been ſerious, but given way to Formality.

This (my Brethren) is but to go to Hell in the way of Duty; he that is not ſerious, but outſided and formal in Duty all his life, will never be faithful therein till death.

Conſider then, in every Duty, how ſerious you ought to be; and remember that when ever you Pray, when ever you hear the Word, when ever you receive the Sacrament, every one of theſe Duties brings you a ſtep nearer to Heaven, or to Hell; they will all have an influence upon your Eternal condition, making you, if not fit for everlaſting Happineſs, yet fit for *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Miſery!*

In every Duty you are doing that which, to be ſure, if not well done, will undo you for ever!

10. *Labour to have the fear of God continually before your eyes. Qui operatur ut accedamus, idem*

operatur ne diſcedamus. Auguſt. *de bono Perſeverant.* ‘God (ſaith *Auſtin*) that hath wrought on us, ‘to bring us home to him, muſt alſo work in us, ‘that we revolt not again from him; which he ‘doth, by putting his fear into our hearts, ‘*Jer.* 32. 40.

The fear of God, if it be freſh in us, will make us keep home with him; be careful of uſing all means of retaining his Favour, and at all times to ſhun whatſoever may either offend Him, or ſavour of diſloyalty and unfaithfulneſs to Him.

By the Fear of the Lord, men depart not from that which is good, but *from that which is evil:* This puts an holy awe upon the Soul, and ſo keeps a man from all ſinful excurſions, whereby he might forfeit his faithfulneſs, *Prov.*16.6.

In the Fear of Man, indeed, there is a ſnare; This made *Peter* deny Chriſt; *Abraham* equivocate; *David* feign himſelf mad; and many it puts upon the like indirect courſes; making them rather ſtudy compliance, than Conſcience: But the Fear of God, when a man fears to diſpleaſe him, is afraid leſt he ſhould not hold out, trembles to commit the leaſt ſin; ſaying, whenever he is tempted thereto, How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God! This, now, is a Fear that preſerves from falling, and is the beſt means to keep a man from that Soul-damning ſin of Apoſtaſie! Get then the Fear of God into your hearts, and labour to have it at all times before your eyes; would you never depart from him, but till death be faithful to him. Oh, let the counſel of our bleſſed Lord be acceptable

ceptable to you, *and fear not those that can only kill the body, but be afraid to offend Him who can cast both body and soul into Hell*, Luk.12.4.

11. *Give diligence to possess your Souls, as with the Fear of God, so likewise with Faith and Affiance in Him.* An Unbeliever is like *Reuben, unstable as water, he shall not excel*; but a true Believer is like *Joseph, whose Bow, though the Archers sorely grieved him, abode in strength; and whose hands were made strong by the Mighty God of* Jacob, *Gen.*49.4. & 23, 34.

The true Believer is the wise man that builds on the Rock, and therefore what storms soever may arise, yet his house stands; by Faith he lives, and that makes him Faithful till he dies.

True Faith is a victorious Grace, and therefore labour to get it; cast a Believer into Prison, his Faith will enlarge him; cast him upon the waters of Afflictions, he can follow Christ there, his Faith bears him up and will not let him sink: A Believer having, by Faith, cast his Anchor in Heaven, can never be turned aside by any Storm, but continues stedfast, unmoveable, and faithful to the very death.

12. *Be sure to get a self-denying frame of spirit.* Self-denial is the main Foundation of Godliness; and if this be not well laid, to be sure the whole building will have a terrible fall.

Self-abdidation, is the way to Self-preservation; the Self-denying Christian is most likely to prove a persevering Christian. If either it be Honour, or Estate, or Good-name, or Relations, yea, or Life it self, that we cannot deny for

Chriſt, to be ſure we can never be faithful to Chriſt till death, *Matth.*16.24.

How far are they then from a poſſibility of being faithful to death, who cannot deny themſelves in theſe things; who, inſtead of crucifying the fleſh, pamper it; who, inſtead of denying their liberty, give way to licentiouſneſs; who, inſtead of foregoing their Eſtates, are ſeeking great things for themſelves; who, inſtead of hating Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Brethren, and Siſters, together with all other Relations after the fleſh, prefer them before Chriſt, beſtowing that love upon them which is only due to Him; who, in a word, inſtead of loſing their life for Chriſt, will rather hazard the loſing of Chriſt to keep it?

Is this (my Brethren) to deny your ſelves, thus to indulge, and ſave your ſelves? Hard it is, I confeſs to deny Self; Oh, but it is harder to deny Chriſt, and that Chriſt ſhould deny you, commanding you *to depart accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels!* *Matth,*10.33.

13. *Strive, as for a Self-denying, ſo for a patient, enduring frame of heart.* A Chriſtian without patience, is like a Souldier without his harneſs; he will never endure the ſhock of temptations, whoſe Soul is not armed with patience; nor can he ever be perſeverant, who is not alſo patient in well-doing.

Patience is not only the ornament, but alſo the conſervatory of other Graces; we cannot perform a Duty, nor mortifie a Luſt, nor bring forth any Fruit, without patience.

Chriſtianus,

Chriſtianus, Crucianus; If we will be Chriſtians indeed, we muſt bear the Croſs; neither doth the ſhadow more undividedly follow the body, than afflictions the profeſſion of Chriſt.

So then, the neceſſity of ſuffering Afflictions, inferrs a neceſſity of Patience. For, as he that is to ſtand under a heavie burden, muſt have ſtrong ſhoulders, or elſe he muſt needs ſink: So, unleſs by Patience we bear ſuch burdens, as do inevitably follow an holy life, we cannot but ſink under them, and fall away.

Oh then, give diligence to get a patient, enduring frame of Spirit, whereby you may run the Race God hath ſet before you; neither fainting for any difficulties, nor ſitting down by the way, till at length, you be crowned with eternal life! *Heb.* 12. 1.

14. *Take heed that you allow not of any ſin, that you indulge not your ſelves in the practiſe of any known iniquity.* As *Sampſon* was bound in vain ſo long as his hair was uncut: So, in vain doth he hope to be faithful till death, who mortifies not every luſt, but ſuffers ſome delicate *Agag* to live, whom God would have ſlain.

What made *Judas*, ſo perfidiouſly betray his Maſter, but only his immoderate deſire of worldly gain? Was not this alſo that, which made *Demas* deſert *Paul*, and, of a glorious profeſſour, become a dreadful apoſtate, even his inordinate love to this preſent world? Did not *Dalilah* perſwade *Sampſon*, to diſcover where his ſtrength lay, though to his own ruin? And *Herodias*, did not ſhe prevail with *Herod* to kill *John* Baptiſt, though he knew him to be a juſt man, and could

not upon that account, but reverence him?

Oh, it's a dreadful thing to be enſlaved to any one ſin, for a man to indulge himſelf in any known iniquity! He can never be faithful to death, who ſuffers any one luſt in his heart to live unmortified. Would you therefore be faithful unto death, would you ſtill hold faſt your integrity, then ſee that you keep your ſelves from *your own iniquity*! *Pſal.* 18. 24. If there be any luſt that you deſire to be ſpared in, if any *Dalitah*, that you would not deny, if any *Herodias* that you would not be divorced from, if any pleaſing or profitable way of ſinning, that you would not for-go; to be ſure, you will for-go your profeſſion, you will never be faithful till death, but prove damned Apoſtates in the end!

Oh then, conſider this: notwithſtanding your Chriſtian-profeſſion, and all your religious performances, how many and glorious ſoever, yet ſtill moſt dreadful and lamentable is your preſent condition; you are breeding up a Serpent, that at length will ſting you to death; that one ſin will undoe you for ever; you allow your ſelves in it, and muſt therefore be eternally damned for it!

And haſt thou, poor ſelf-deſtroying ſinner, any luſt that will countervail the loſs of thy immortal ſoul, together with the damnation both of thy ſoul and bodie in Hell, to all Eternitie?

Oh, how much better were it that you ſhould ſacrifice the deareſt luſt, than that by forfeiting your integritie out of love thereto, you ſhould expoſe your ſelves to ſuch endleſs, inſupportable, and remedileſs torments!

15. *Be cordial in all your obedience; and what ever you do in a way of worſhip, do it from the heart, as unto God.* Where the heart is not firſt in obedience, giving motion to all the powers of ſoul, and members of body, that man will never hold out to the laſt.

When men are not as good inwardly in ſubſtance, as outwardly in appearance, uſually they diſcover themſelves in the end: And becauſe they would not be what they ſeemed, they ſhall not at length, have ſo much as the ſemblance of that which they would not be.

For though Chriſt hath promiſed to cover the ſincere ſouls infirmities, he hath yet threatned to diſcover the Hypocrites impieties.

Oh, that therefore you would ſtrive to be upright, giving diligence in every dutie, to approve your hearts unto God! For a man to be eſtranged in heart from God, whilſt in external performances, he draws nigh to him; this is but like the *Philiſtines* ſetting up *Dagon*, before the Ark of God; the *Dagon* of all thy duties, if not cordial, and from thy heart, will have a terrible fall. He that is not for God in his heart, will at length, in his life and practiſes, apoſtatize from him; To be ſure, he can never be faithful unto death!

Let me then again beſeech you, to be cordial in every dutie; You have an heart-ſearching God to deal with, you have a dreadful Tribunal, and an all-ſeeing impartial Judge to ſtand before; And will you not then labour to do all that you do from the heart, as unto God? Oh, never think that thy External performances, without

the inward concurrence of thy heart therewith, will endure long; never think to ſail in the leaking Ship of Hypocriſie, to the ſhore of Eternal felicity; For this is only to go to Hell in a more ſpecious, and devout way, than others!

16. *Give diligence, that you may grow in Grace, and be daily progreſſive in the ways of Holineſs.* He that doth not increaſe to more fruitfulneſs, will ſoon be on the loſing hand; and he that thrives not in his Spiritual eſtate, we may ſadly in a while perceive to decline.

Non progredi, eſt regredi. No ſooner doth a Chriſtian begin to ſtand ſtill, but you may clearly diſcern him going backward: To be ſure, the man, who takes no care to make a proficiencie in holyneſs, will end at length in Apoſtacy!

Think not then with thy ſelf, that having run thus long, thou maiſt now ſtand ſtill a while: Or, that having gotten thus far, thou maiſt now ſit down and breathe thee: But, ſee that thou earneſtly preſs forward towards the Mark, never ceaſing to grow in Grace, till Grace be perfected into Glory.

If, Chriſtians, we be not growing, we are undoubtedlie decaying: and if we be not making on in proficiencie, we are going back amain to Apoſtacy.

For, *Inter profectum & defectum, nihil medium invenitur.* Between mending and pairing, there is no mean. That we have will be gone, if we ſtrive not to get more.

Oh then, content not your ſelves with preſent attainments: but labour faithfullie to improve your Talent all your life, if ever you deſire to be

be faithful unto death! That you may not fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs, you muſt labour to be progreſſive in the waies of holineſs, 2 *Pet.*3.17.

17. *Let your obedience be uniform, and of equal extent with all God's commands.* He that only begins in the obſervation of ſome, will end in the violation of all Gods commandments: and to be ſure, where a mans reſpect to the will of God, is at firſt but partial, his neglect of the obedience thereto, will at length be total. True obedience is univerſal; every one of Gods commands hath ſuch authority upon a Chriſtian, that he knows not how to diſpenſe with it; though he fail in every dutie, yet he dares not neglect any dutie, *Pſal.* 119. 6.

Unſound hearts, as they are ſleight in their obedience, ſo they are uſually partial; they will walk in ſome of Gods ſtatutes, but not in all; in ſome duties, they will be zealous, but in others, remiſs; *Jehu* was zealous againſt the idolatry of *Ahab*, but gives a toleration to the golden Calves; Many that have meerly a form of godlineſs, will ſeem zealous, but yet ſome dutie they will diſpence with, ſome ſin they will indulge; *In this thing, the Lord pardon thy ſervant*, is the language of every Hypocrite, who will undoubtedly at length prove a dreadful Apoſtate, 1 *King.*5.8.

Oh then, that you may give obedience of your integritie, and be faithful unto death, make conſcience of every dutie, whether commanded in the firſt, or the ſecond Table.

Strive with *David*, to have reſpect *to all Gods commandments*; Let your eye be upon them all, and be ſure that you perform every thing which you

you know to be a dutie, if you would not at length be confounded, and fall away to nothing!

18. *Be careful to keep your ſelves unſpotted of the world, not conforming your ſelves to the many brutiſh, abominable, and ſinful practiſes thereof.* There is, indeed, a wonderful propenſity by nature in all men to do as the moſt do, to ſwim with the common current, and to accommodate themſelves to the humour of the Times, be it what it will; ſo that, like the *Camelion*, they can change their hue with every one that they converſe with: like the *Polypus*, that reſembles every ſtone to which it ſticks; they can put on the vizzard of the Times, how odious ſoever: Or, like Pictures curiouſly drawn, that ſeem to fix their eyes upon every one that comes into the room; they can be Prophane, and appear Religious, as occaſion requires: But Chriſtians, who deſire to hold faſt their integrity, muſt not thus follow a multitude to do evil; it being impoſſible, that thoſe who are *led away with the errour of the wicked, ſhould not fall at length from their own ſtedfaſtneſs*, 2 Pet. 3. 17.

Have therefore *no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them*: Be not ambitious of walking in the garb of the times; do not follow a multitude in that which is ſinful, but ſee that you keep your ſelves from the common errour, endeavouring to hold faſt your integrity in the worſt of times, like fiſhes, that retain their freſhneſs in the ſalt Sea. In matters both of Faith and Practiſe, we muſt walk by Rule, and not by Example; ſtriving ſtill to keep our ſelves pure, from the many abomi-

abominations and pollutions that are in the world through luſt.

Argumentum peſſimum eſt Turba. Every man will eaſily acknowledg, that the Moſt are alwayes the worſt; why then, ſhould we make them our Rule to walk by? Oh, let me beſeech you, as a dying man, to be alwayes jealous of that for which the wicked contend, not allowing in your practiſe, of thoſe things, wherein the profane and ungodly of the world take delight?

However, let this be remembred, The multitude can make nothing good by their practiſe, which in it ſelf is unlawful; they may bring you into ſin, but can neither excuſe you of it, nor exempt you from wrath.

If therefore, you will ſin with the moſt, you muſt periſh with the moſt; if you will do as the world, as though that would bear you out, to be ſure, you will at length be condemned with the world. For, *the deſtruction of the tranſgreſſors ſhall be together, and they that thus forſake the Lord, ſhall at length be conſumed,* Iſa. 1. 28.

19. *Be not confident of your own power, but ſee that you ſet out in the ſtrength of Chriſt.* If He be not as well the Finiſher, as the Author, of our Faith, we can never be faithful unto Death. Jeſus Chriſt is a Chriſtian's City of Refuge, to which he muſt flie, when purſued with any avenger of blood; Chriſt is a Chriſtian's Ark, wherein he muſt hide himſelf, that he may not be carried away with the common Deluge; Chriſt, in a word, is the Cabinet, wherein God's jewels are kept; ſo that, if ever we deſire to ſtand, we muſt get out of our ſelves, and take Sanctuary in Chriſt,

Chriſt, with whom alone there is ſafety.

If the Tree had no rooting in the earth, it would be as apt to fall as any leaf that it bears; if the Ship have no ballaſt, it's eaſily over-turned with every wind; if the Houſe have no foundation, it cannot ſtand long: ſo, if you be not ſoundly rooted and built upon Chriſt, as your Foundation, if by faith you receive not ſtrength from him, every wind will over-turn you, every temptation will prove too hard for you, and the building of your Chriſtian Profeſſion, how ſtately and glorious ſoever, will at length have a terrible fall.

See then, I beſeech you, where your ſtrength lies; Even a reed that is apt to be ſhaken with every wind, yet, if tyed to a Rock it ſtands immoveable: ſo, if thy ſoul be united by faith to Chriſt, and thou daily goeſt out, like that poor woman, to touch Chriſt, that thou maiſt feel virtue coming from him, to heal all thy weakneſſes, why then, thou canſt never fall, but wilt ſtand immoveable.

Let Satan dig his Mines, lay his train of Gunpowder, ſhoot his balls of Wilde-fire againſt thee, yet, if thou be built upon this Rock of Ages, if Chriſt pitch his Tent about thee, thy heart, like a Garriſon, will remain impregnable.

Oh then, make Chriſt all in your abilities, let him be your City of Refuge to flie to, let him be your Ark to hide you in; let him be your Foundation to build upon. A man is ſafe upon a Rock: When the Soul, denying it's own ſtrength, goes out of it ſelf, and centers upon the Rock Chriſt, now it is firmly ſetled upon its Baſis;

ſis; let the rain deſcend, let the floods come, let the winds blow and beat upon him, yet he falls not, as being founded upon a Rock, *Mat.*7.25.

That then, which above all things I would commend to you, as moſt like to make you faithful till Death, is this, That you both begin, hold on, and finiſh, in the ſtrength of our bleſſed Lord.

Without him, you can do nothing; but through him, *ſtrengthening you with all might, in your inward man*, you ſhall be able to do all things, *Phil.* 4. 13.

The glory of all our victories belongs to Chriſt; he keeps the Fort-royal of grace, that it be not blown up; he gives us, not only our Crown, but our Shield too; he not only gives us our Reward, when we overcome, but alſo our Strength, whereby we overcome, *Rev.* 12. 11.

Be ſtrong, therefore, in the Lord, and in the power of his Might; if ever you would be faithful to Chriſt, till Death, it muſt be, by receiving continual ſupplies of ſtrength from Chriſt all your life.

Sampſon's ſtrength was in his Locks; a Believers ſtrength lies wholly in Chriſt; if then, you would not deny Chriſt, deny your own ſtrength. He that truſts to himſelf, ſhall be left to himſelf; he, who preſumes to go out in his own ſtrength, will at length come off to his own ſhame!

20. And laſtly; *See that you have continually an eye, to the recompence of Reward, often meditating upon the glory and perpetuity of that Crown, which abides, in another life, all thoſe that are faithful here till Death.* For, though we may not be mer-

mercenaries, ſerving God onely for Hire-ſake; yet, we may lawfully be animated to chearfulneſs and conſtancy in our obedience, from the certainty and fulneſs of Reward that abides it, *ſeeking for glory, honour, immortality, and Eternal Life, by patient continuance in well doing*, Rom. 2. 7.

Let every man amongſt you, then, ſeriouſly think with himſelf, There is a crown of Life feiſable, and I am capable of obtaining it, if I lay not blocks in the way, and forſake not my own Happineſs. Though within I ſee nothing but guilt, though without I ſee nothing but dangers, yet, there is a Kingdom that cannot be moved, there is an immarceſcible never-fading crown of Life to be had, if I will but be faithful unto Death!

How then, ſhould this ſteel us with courage, and make us ſtedfaſt in the work of the Lord; and who would not offer violence to himſelf by mortification, and to Heaven by earneſt ſupplication, that at laſt he may arrive at this ſtate of Happineſs?

Oh, forfeit not, then, this Crown, this Heavenly Kingdom, this eternal weight of Glory, by falling from your own ſtedfaſtneſs: but, be faithful, I beſeech you, to Chriſt; holding faſt, and not leaving, your integrity till Death, that hereafter you may be crowned by Chriſt, with Eternal Life!

FINIS.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Phil. 4. 9.

Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do: and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.

THE *Amanuenſis*, or Pen-man of this Epiſtile, was *Paul* the Apoſtle, who being Priſoner at *Rome*, takes occaſion, from the benevolence of the *Philippians*, ſent unto him by *Epaphroditus* for the ſupply of his wants, there to confirm them, by this Epiſtle, in the Faith, notwithſtanding his bonds; to encourage them in godlineſs, and walking worthy of the Goſpel, but eſpecially in ſtedfaſtneſs, unity, and lowlineſs of mind; to warn them againſt certain perverſe Zealots of the Law, who mingled Works with Faith, in point of Juſtification; and, in a word, to quicken them to the practiſe of all Chriſtian Duties.

My Text falls under the laſt of theſe Heads, wherein our bleſſed Apoſtle being about to *Epi-*

logize,

logize, and drawing towards a concluſion, endeavours to Epitomize his whole Epiſtle, and to give them, in a few words, the ſum of all his Apoſtolick Advice; which was, That they ſhould live up to their knowledge, practiſing, with all faithfulneſs, *the things they had both learned, and heard, and received from the Lord, by him.*

Thoſe things, ſaith he, *which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do: and the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

In which words, you may obſerve theſe two things:

1. A *Precept*, holding forth the duty and employment of a Chriſtian; *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do.*

2. A *Promiſe*, holding forth the priviledge and encouragement of a Chriſtian; *And the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

Firſt, For the *Precept*; It holds forth the duty and employment of a Chriſtian, and that is, to live up to his knowledge, to tranſcribe the Law of God into his life, and to practiſe with all diligence, whatever he hath learned, and heard, and received from the Lord, whether by Precept or Example.

Secondly, For the *Promiſe*; It holds forth the priviledge and encouragement of a Chriſtian, and that is, that doing what he knows, and exerciſing himſelf in the practice of what he hath both *heard, and learned, and received from the Lord*, he is ſure to have God's preſence with him, not only

only in regard of his Eſſence, for ſo he is every where, and with every man preſent, neither can he be otherwiſe; but alſo in regard of his Grace and Favour.

Doct. *Thoſe that walk in obedience with God, he will alwayes be graciouſly preſent with them.* The God of Peace will vouchſafe his gracious Preſence to all thoſe, who, having heard, received, and learned, whether by Precept or Example, the Truth as it is in Jeſus, are careful to do accordingly.

Such as yield obedience to God's holy Will, endeavouring to practiſe what they have heard, and to live up to the Truths they have learned, ſhall never be forſaken, but God will alwayes afford them his gracious Preſence.

If any man practiſe what he knows (provided that he know the Truth, as it is in Jeſus) if any man walk in obedience with God, endeavouring to expreſs what he hath heard, and learned, and received from Him, by the Holineſs of his Life and Converſation; the Lord will be graciouſly preſent with that man, as a Pilot to guide him, as a Rock to ſuſtain him, and as a Fountain of living water, to miniſter all fulneſs to him.

In the proſecution of this *Doctrine*, having ſhewed you, how the Lord will be preſent with them that walk in obedience with him, I ſhall give you the *Reaſons*, evincing it, and ſo come to the *practical Improvement* of the whole, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, Therefore, by way of *Explication*; The Lord will be graciouſly preſent with thoſe that walk in obedience with him, theſe eight wayes.

1. By way of gracious *Acceptation*; *Never did any man yet ſtudy, to approve himſelf to God in a way of dutiful Obedience, but the Lord alſo was preſent with him, in a way of gracious Acceptance.* A wicked man, not ſtudying Obedience to God, finds no Acceptance with him, in ought that he doth; the ſighs of a wicked man, are unſavory, his ſolemn ſacrifice is as dung, and his prayers are abominable; God will not come neer him, for his breath is infectious. But for thoſe, that live up to their knowledg, God highly favours them, and takes all that they do in good part.

Not a good word falls from their lips, but is recorded, *Mal.* 3. 16. Not a tear drops from their eyes, but 'tis taken up, and bottled, *Pſal.* 56. 8. Their weak prayers ſound like Melody; their broken ſighs ſmell like Incenſe, *Gen.* 8. 21. And their very ſtammerings ſeem Rhetorical, *Cant.* 2. 14.

When all the gliſtering ſhews of Hypocrites evaporate, and come to nothing, yet they that ſtudy to walk in Obedience with God, are crowned with acceptation.

We oftentimes come to God with broken prayers, but if we be ſuch as make it our care to practiſe, *what we have heard, and learned, and received,* God can ſpell out our meaning, and will take our weakeſt performances, as a moſt grateful Preſent, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12.

2. By way of *Direction*; *The Pilot, by his preſence in the Sphip, and by his skill and activity, turns the Rudder of the Ship, and guides the courſe thereof, ſteering a right courſe towards the deſired Haven: ſo God, as a ſpiritual Pilot, is preſent in the Ship of every obedient Soul, guiding it by his Counſel, and en-*

enabling it by the Direction and guidance of his own Spirit, to ſteer a right courſe to the Haven of Eternal Reſt. By nature, we underſtand not the things of the Spirit of God, neither indeed can we, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned: but, ſaith Chriſt, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God,* John 7. 17. Knowledg is the Pilot to guide us in our Obedience; if Zeal be not according to Knowledge, it's will-Worſhip; and there is no better way to become knowing, than by doing and practiſing what we have already learned.

The diſobedient and ungodly, are in darkneſs until now, neither can they diſcern as they ought, what concerns their everlaſting Peace: But, *the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him,* endeavouring to do what they know, *and he will teach them in the way that they ſhould chooſe,* Pſal. 25. 12. 14.

Oh then, how great is this priviledge, that God will reſolve our doubts, acquaint us what is his Will, and give his Spirit to lead us into all neceſſary Truths, when we make it our care to anſwer our Knowledge with ſuitable practiſe! He that doth not what he knows, ſhall not ſhortly know what to do: but he, whoſe life is correſpondent to his light, God will never leave to ſit in *Egyptian*-darkneſs.

3. By way of *Preſervation*; *God is alwayes preſent with thoſe, to keep them from evil, who ſtudy Obedience to him, in that which is good.* If God's people abſtain from drunkenneſs, ſwearing, idolatry, and the like abominable impieties, which inevitably drown the ſoul in perdition, let them

not rob the Lord of his glory, in aſcribing it to the goodneſs of their natures, but let them ingenuouſly acknowledge it to proceed from the goodneſs of God, that preſerves them more than others, and many times prevents their falling into thoſe ſins, which by nature they were prone to, as well as the reſt.

Thus *David* was kept from murdering *Nabal*; *Noah*, from partaking with the old world, in their wickedneſs; *Lot*, from following after the abominations of *Sodom*; *Joſeph*, from conſenting to the lewd inticements of his impudent Miſtris; and thoſe three Jewiſh Worthies, from falling down to worſhip before the golden Image, which *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon* had ſet up, *Dan.* 3. 16. 18.

When therefore, God's people conſider *Judas* burſting aſunder, through black deſpair; *Julian* dying with revenge and rage againſt Chriſt; *Achitophel* diſpatching himſelf for very madneſs, becauſe his oracle was not received; one blaſpheming, another ſinfully complying with a wicked world, and a third running into all exceſs of riot; Oh, let them then alſo conſider the goodneſs of God, and the power of his grace in preſerving them from the like horrid impieties!

Every one of God's people, did not the Lord preſerve them by his grace, and keep off temptations, would ſoon be a *Cain*, or *Achitophel*, yea, a Devil incarnate.

Oh then, think with your ſelves, if the grace of God did not keep off ſuch a ſin, ſuch a luſt, ſuch a temptation, how had it ſwallowed us up, as the Whale did *Jonah*!

4. By

4. By way of *Corroboration*; *Thoſe that walk in obedience with God, doing what they know, the Lord is ſtill preſent with them, aſſiſting them by his grace, and ſtrengthning them in all their weakneſſes.* Whence is it, that a Chriſtian is able to do duty, to reſiſt temptations, and to ſcorn, as well the ſmiles, as the frowns, of a deceitful world; whether ſeeking by promiſes, to draw into ſin, or by threatnings, to deter from duty, but through the Preſence of God ſtrengthning him? *Phil.* 4. 13. *Paul* hath, as one obſerves, a kind of Omnipotency, and to him, with every good Chriſtian, all things are poſſible, becauſe poſſible to the Grace of God, who is with them.

The ſtrength of a Chriſtian, lies not in himſelf, but in God aſſiſting him; the Bird may as well flie without wings, as he reſiſt a temptation, perform duty acceptably, mortifie any luſt, or do any thing prevailing, without the Preſence of God ſtrengthning him.

As *Sampſon*, while God kept him, and was preſent with him, no *Philiſtine* was too ſtrong for him: ſo, while God is preſent with us, aſſiſting us by his Grace, we cannot fall, and when he keeps us not, we cannot ſtand.

5. By way of *Protection*; *Such as do what they have heard, and learned, and received, with them God is preſent; not only as a Sun for Direction, but alſo, as a Shield for Protection; not only to do them good, but alſo, to defend them from evil*, Pſal. 84. 11. *Pharoah*, King of *Egypt*, followed *Iſrael*, but he and his mighty men were drowned, and *Iſrael* eſcaped; for the Lord was with *Iſrael*. *Saul* hunteth *David*, as a Partrich upon the mountains,

but *Saul* periſheth, and *David* is made a King; for the Lord was with *David*. *Haman* hateth *Mordecai*, reſolving to have him hanged high enough, becauſe he would not ſtoop low enough: but *Haman* himſelf is hanged, and *Mordecai* is advanced; for God is with *Mordecai*.

And thus, if we ſtudy to walk with God, he will give us protection, and be preſent with us, to deliver us out of all our troubles. For the Lord, whom we ſerve, is ſtronger than All; and if he be preſent with us, who can be againſt us? *Rom.* 8. 31.

Nemo nos ladit, niſi qui Deum vincit. He only, who can overcome God, can bring evil upon thoſe that walk in Obedience with him; neither is any man delivered from evil, but through God protecting him.

When therefore, we ſee one diſgraced, another ſlain; one diſeaſed, another cut off by the ſtroke of Death; one loſe his eſtate, another his liberty, and we our ſelves, delivered from the like calamities, how can we chooſe but aſcribe it to God's goodneſs, protecting us there-from?

6. By way of *Communication*; *The wicked are eſtranged from God; but the Righteous have acceſs into his Preſence, and in all the methods thereof he ſets out himſelf, communicating of his Grace and Goodneſs to them.* Such *open to him*, and therefore He comes in *to ſup with them*, that they may *ſup with Him*, *Rev.* 3. 20. Such are often drawing nigh to him in Duty, he therefore draws nigh to them, in a way of Mercy, and gracious Communication, *Jam.* 4.

If they meditate, they meet with God, and what

what a bleſſed Contemplation is that? If they hear his Word, they meet with God, and what a joyful hour muſt that be? If they receive the Sacrament, there alſo they meet with God in Chriſt, and what a Soul-ſolacing Feaſt is that? If they bow their ſouls in Prayer, there they meet with God; and oh, what an Heaven upon earth is this?

Oh, little do any of you, that are yet diſobedient, know, what ſecret Debates, what ſpiritual In-comes, what heavenly Illapſes, and Soul-raviſhing contentments, God's people find in Communion with him! They ſtudy obedience to him, and therefore he is graciouſly preſent with them, communicating himſelf to their ſouls in every Ordinance: So that, thoſe that are willing and obedient, they eat the fat of Ordinances; they have other joys, other pleaſures, other delights, to be feeding upon, and ſolacing their ſouls withal, in the duties of God's Worſhip, than what the world is aware of.

Such are ſatisfied with the fatneſs of Gods Houſe; they ſit down under his Shadow, with great delight; they find his Fruit ſweet to their taſte; and one days communion with the Lord, it is better to their ſouls, than a thouſand elſewhere!

7. By way of *Occultation*. *God is an hiding place for his people, their Refuge and Fortreſs, in times of trouble; Thoſe that keep cloſe to God, to do what he loves, the Lord will keep cloſe to them, to hide them from what they fear.* In the time of trouble, ſaith *David*, *He ſhall hide me in his Pavilion: in the ſecret of his Tabernacle ſhall he hide me,* Pſal. 32. 7.

God hath ſecret Chamberes of Providence, wherein to hide his people in time of danger, and publick calamities.

Iſa. 26. 20,21. *Come my people*, ſaith the Lord, *enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy Doors about thee; Hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, until the Indignation be overpaſt.* When danger purſues Gods people, he teaches them to run to himſelf, as a moſt inviolable Sanctuary. *The name of the Lord*, ſaith the wiſe Man, *is a ſtrong Tower, the Righteous runneth to it, and is ſafe*, Prov. 18. 10.

A Child of God never dwells ſo ſecurely, as when God himſelf hides him under the Ark, in the moſt ſecret place of his own Sanctuary. For, the nearer to God, the further from danger.

8. And laſtly, by way of *Supportation*. *Though God be not always ſo preſent with his people, as to hide them from ſuffering, yet he will always be preſent, to ſupport them under their ſufferings, how many and grievous ſoever.* As, without God's leave, no affliction can overtake us, ſo when it doth overtake us, God will not leave us: But, if we walk in obedience with him, the Lord will alſo be preſent with us, to ſupport us under all our preſſures, *Iſa.* 47. 10. *Fear not, for I am with thee, be not diſmaid, for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteouſneſs.* Here, you have God engaging his almighty Power, ſo that, if that be ſufficient, he will be ſure to bear you up under all your burdens.

Though God will not always deliver his people,

ple out of trouble, yet he will ſtill be preſent with them, ſupporting them, that they may not deſpond, nor ſink under the burden. Iſa. 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overthrow thee: When thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.*

If at any time an ungrateful world caſt Gods people into the Waters of great Tribulation: yet the Lord will be preſent with them, bearing them up (as it were) by the chin, that they may not ſink, nor be utterly overwhelmed therein!

Secondly, Thus I have ſhewed you how God is preſent with thoſe that live up to their knowledge: As an Altar of perfume, cauſing them to find acceptance both in their perſons, and performances with himſelf; As the Sun which gives them light in darkneſs; As a wall of fire which defends them in the aſſaults of all their enemies; As a Fountain of living water communicating ſtreams to refreſh them, when all their Veſſels, like *Hagar's*, prove empty Bottles; As an Ark to hide them in, from the deluge of all diſtreſſes: And as a living Rock, ſuſtaining them under all their preſſures, or burdens, how many or great ſoever: Come we now therefore, to give you the reaſons, why God will vouchſafe to be graciouſly preſent with them, who walk in obedience with him, according to what they have heard, received, and learned, whether by precept or example.

1. *Becauſe, thoſe that are preſent with God in a*

way

way of obedience, the Lord is engaged by promiſe, to be graciouſly preſent with them. 2 Chron. 15. 2. *Hear ye me,* Aſa, *and all* Judah, *and* Benjamin, *the Lord is with you, whilſt you are with him.* Thoſe that are preſent with God in a way of duty, he hath here promiſed, to be preſent with them in a way of Grace and Mercy.

'Tis our duty indeed, to keep cloſe to God, and to walk in obedience with him, though after all he ſhould reject us, and give us no reward: But, for our better encouragement, God ſweetens his Commands with Promiſes, tying our work and our wages, our duty and reward together.

So, that being preſent with God in a way of obedience according to the condition, he cannot but be graciouſly preſent with us, according to the mind and true intent of the promiſe. *For the Lord is not a God that he ſhould lie, nor the ſon of man that he ſhould repent,* Num. 23. 19.

2. *Becauſe, ſuch as walk in obedience with God, do engage him to be preſent with them, by depending fiducially upon him.* Truſt, is a kind of engagement, when there is no promiſe but: What is it to truſt upon God, who hath made ſo many promiſes, of being preſent with thoſe that keep cloſe to him?

Common ingenuity, will teach us to ſtand by thoſe that put confidence in us; And will not the goodneſs of God much more incline him to be graciouſly preſent with his own people, who place their whole truſt and affiance to him?

3. *Becauſe, ſuch ſtand related to God, and are become his people. The Lord hath ſet apart the godly*

ly for himſelf; and that propriety he hath in them, engageth Him to be graciouſly preſent with them, *Pſal.* 4. 3.

Though there were nothing to move him to make ſuch his people, before he did; yet, there is ſome thing that may engage him never to forſake, but to be graciouſly preſent with them, now he hath made them his people; and that is, his propriety in them, becauſe they are his people

Hath he choſen us, and will he again reprobate us? Hath he ſet us a part for himſelf, and will he caſt us off? Hath he purchaſed us, and will he reject his own purchaſe? Hath he married us to himſelf, and will he not cohabit with us, but inſtead thereof, be divorced from us, notwithſtanding he hath told us, he hates putting away? *Mal.* 2. 16. Hath he, in a word, of his own good pleaſure, made us his people, and will he repent of his choice, with drawing from us, inſtead of being graciouſly preſent with us? 1 *Sam.* 12. 27.

4. And laſtly, *Becauſe God is concerned in point of Honour, to be graciouſly preſent with them.* Such ſtand by God aſſerting his Intereſt and Glory in the world; And is He not then concerned, in point of honour, to ſtand by them?

To practiſe *what we have heard, and received, and learned of God,* is to run the hazard of reproach, diſgrace, and perſecution in the world: Now all this being done upon God's account, and in obedience to him, How can it ſtand with His honour, to ſtand aloof, and not to be graciouſly preſent with us in the midſt of ſo many dangers?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Having thus given you the Proof, let us now come to the *Improvement* of the *Doctrine*, by way of *Uſe* and *Application*.

Firſt, By way of *Information*; we may hence take notice of theſe enſuing *Particulars*:

1. How ſad and deplorable their condition is, who *having heard, learned, and received the things of God*, are not careful to do accordingly. You that have heard, you that have been taught how you ought to walk, and yet practiſe not what you have learned, moſt dreadful, and lamentable is your condition? For God is not graciouſly preſent with thee, but departed from thee. What though thou haſt Riches with thee, and Honours with thee, and Friends with thee; if God be not with thee, but ſets Himſelf as an Enemy againſt thee; Can thy Riches, thy Honours, and thy Friends profit thee in the day of his wrath? Can they keep off the ſtroke of his Indignation? Can they make thee happie, who, through the want of God's gracious preſence, art compleatly miſerable?

Oh, that all you, who are ſtill diſobedient, living contrary to the many precious Truths and wholeſome Inſtructions which you have heard, received, and learned, had but your eyes open to behold to what certain, great, and unconceivable miſery you are every moment, for want of God's gracious preſence, obnoxious!

Who, alas, can ſtand by you, if God be not with you? Who is there that can give you comfort, if He frown upon you? Or, Who can relieve your Souls, when aſſaulted by Men, tempted by Devils, and grievouſly tormented by the eſtuations

eſtuations of your own Conſciences, if God depart from you? The Happineſs of man conſiſts in Communion with God, and all thoſe are compleatly miſerable, with whom the Lord is not preſent!

2. The great ſafety, and bleſſed ſecurity of all thoſe that endeavour to walk according *to what they have heard, and learned, and received of the Lord.* Not to do as the moſt do, not to run with the men of the world into the ſame exceſs of Riot, but to walk circumſpectly, endeavouring to anſwer our knowledge with ſutable practiſe, this doth uſually enrage the world againſt us; however, if God be with us, what can all the world do againſt us? *Rom.*8.31.

Such walk with God in a way of Duty: whatever therefore the world and ungodly men may attempt to the contrary, yet God's preſence with them therein will make it a way of ſafety.

However, then, ſome timorated Spirits may think by diſſembling conſcience, and giving way to ſinful compliances to ſecure themſelves; yet we may hence ſee, that there is no ſuch ſecurity as in walking with God in a way of Duty.

Communion with God in a way of Duty, is a ſure Sanctuary of Refuge; as no Stranger can enter into it, ſo God's people have moſt ſafety while they dwell in it, *Pſal.*27.5.

By diſſembling Conſcience, and waving Dutie, we run our ſelves upon a thouſand dangers: But by diligence in the waies of God, and being faithful in all the duties of his worſhip, we betake our ſelves *to the Name of the Lord*, in which, *as a ſtrong Tower*, we are ſure to find ſafetie, *Prov.*18.10.

3. The

3. The desperate follie, and fool-hardiness of all such as set themselves against God's people, opposing them in the practise of *what they have heard, and learned, and received of the* Lord. 'Tis usual with the world, then to trample upon the Righteous when surrounded with Afflictions; they will grieve where God wounds; they will persecute where God smites: But whatever the condition of God's people is, yet the Lord is still present with them; neither can the ungodlie of the world oppose them in well-doing, but they enter a quarrel with God himself.

Why then do you pride your selves against those, like *Moab*, with whom God is present? And, why do you strive to abase those whom God will exalt? *Jer.*48.26,27. Are you stronger than the Mightie God of *Jacob?* And, can you be present to hurt those, with whom God is present to protect, and save?

Oh, how great is the follie of wicked men, whom nothing can reclaim from prosecuting their bloodie thoughts against the Righteous, nor with-hold from opposing them in the practise of what they have learned! Do they know of a certainty, that God is with the Righteous, that no Weapon formed against them shall prosper; and that the Lord by his presence, will secure them against all their Enemies? Why then should they still be kicking against the pricks?

4. What reason all those have to sit down satisfied with their portion, who make it their care to practise what they *have heard, and learned, and received of the Lord.* Though possiblie they have neither Riches, nor Honours, nor Friends in the world

world with them; yet they have God with them, as an inexhauſtible treaſure, to ſupplie all their wants, as a crown of glory upon their heads, and as an everlaſting Friend, who will never fail them! *Heb.*13.5.

What then, though a Chriſtian want other things, is it not enough that God, over all, bleſſed for ever, is ſtill graciouſly preſent with him, and become his portion? Shall he afflict himſelf for want of Star-light, who hath the Sun in its full ſtrength ſhining upon him; or be diſconſolate for the loſs of ſome broken ciſtern, who may go at his pleaſure to the Fountain-head, where waters are ſweeteſt?

Oh, how unſutable were it for you that live up to your knowledge, endeavouring to practiſe what you have learned, to grow deſpondent and repining for want of creature-comforts, when God, your Creator, is alwaies preſent with you to comfort and ſolace your Souls in every condition!

Had you nothing but God's gracious preſence, and an Intereſt in him for your portion; yet this were as much as happineſs comes to, and ſufficient to make you everlaſtingly bleſſed. For, *happy is that People, whoſe God is the Lord,* Pſal.144.15.

Secondly, By way of *Exhortation:* Let me now prevail with you all, thoſe things which *you have heard, and learned, and received,* to do them; Oh, walk in obedience with God, would you ever enjoy his gracious preſence!

Many precious truths have been preached among you; many heavenly Doctrines have been ſet before you; many wholſom leſſons, and faithful

ſul Admonitions have been given you; let me now therefore being for ought I know, as a Star ſetting and riſing no more in this Horizon, like a Lamp going out, and ſhining no more in this your houſe of ſacred meeting, and as a dying man, whoſe laſt breath is now exſpiring, perſwade you for your own good, to remember what you have heard, to hold faſt what you have received, and to practiſe what you have learned!

Oh, let this be the main of your care, that as the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, hath been delivered to you; ſo you may be delivered up to it, expreſſing the ſoundneſs of your knowledge, by the holineſs of your lives, and converſations!

Oh this, my Brethren, is the one thing neceſſary, you may hear much, and yet be ſtrangers to God; you may learn much, and yet never come nigh God: you may receive many wholeſome inſtructions at his hands, and yet at laſt be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from his preſence; but now, if you practiſe what you hear, if you live up to what you have learned, and tranſcribe into your lives, thoſe wholeſom inſtructions you receive from God, he will never forſake you, but will alwayes be graciouſly preſent with you. But, that *I* may not leave you half perſwaded, give me leave to acquaint you with the excellency of God's gracious Preſence, in theſe following particulars.

1. Conſider, *Such is the Preſence of God with thoſe that walk in obedience with him, that it will make them in all things, to thrive and proſper.* The Ark received into *Obed-Edoms* houſe, cauſed all that he had to proſper: So, the Lord received by obedience

Obedience into the heart, and graciouſly preſent there makes the whole man proſperous. He makes him proſper in the inward man, and he alſo makes him proſper in the outward man. Where God is graciouſly preſent, there can nothing be wanting, neither for ſoul, nor for body: But the man is ſucceſsful, and proſpers in all his undertakings, *Pſal.* 1.

Without God's gracious preſence, we can profit by nothing; without this, health is not profitable, nor riches profitable, nor Ordinances profitable; the choiceſt means of Grace, without God's preſence, are but as breaſts without Milk, as bottles without Water; Nay they are not only a dead letter, but the ſavour of Death; Without God's preſence they will damn us; many go loaded to Hell with Ordinances. But, *&c.*

2. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God, with thoſe that walk in obedience with him; that it transforms them into his own likeneſs, making them holy, as he is holy.* As the Sun will change the colour of thoſe that are much in it: So, a man cannot be near to God, but this will make him in Purity and Holineſs, like God.

And, do you not deſire to have ſuch a beauty put upon you, and thus to be adorned with the Robes of Righteouſneſs? Why, do but ſtrive to walk in obedience with God, and he alſo will be graciouſly preſent with you, making you, of Bryars and Thorns, Lillies and Roſes; Of Lyons, Lambs; Of deformed, he will make you comely; And of filthy, he will make you clean, adorning your ſouls, with the jewels of Holineſs, *Col.* 1. 13.

Without the preſence of an Holy God, you can never be holy: And without holineſs, you can never ſee the Lord with comfort, *Heb.* 12. 14. 'Tis onely Grace that leads to Glory. For, No holineſs here, no happineſs hereafter.

3. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God, with thoſe that walk in obedience with him, that it can quiet their ſouls, turning every ſtorm that ariſeth into a bleſſed calm.* When the heart is full of doubts, and diſtreſſes, accuſed by the Law, purſued by the Adverſary, and condemned by it ſelf; Then doth God by his gracious preſence, ſtill the raging of the Sea, give quiet to conſcience, and lay the ſtorm.

Nothing but the breaſt, will quiet the child; So, no-

thing but the breaſt of God's gracious preſence, can quiet a diſtreſſed ſoul, *Rom.* 5. 1.

Would you therefore be at peace, and have quiet in your own conſciences; would you have a ſweet calm, and a ſabbath of reſt from all your ſpiritual Agonies? Walk then in obedience with God, endeavouring to practiſe what you know, that he by his preſence may work your deſire.

4. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God, with all that obey him according to what they have heard, and learned, and received, that nothing can intercept it, nor withhold it from them.* If they go up to Heaven in proſperity, God is there, making all their enjoyments, conduce to their everlaſting advantage; If they be forced to make their bed in Hell, and lie down in ſorrow, God alſo is there turning their ſorrow into joy; If they be glad to take the wings of the morning, and to flie for their lives into the uttermoſt parts of the Earth, God is alſo there, bringing them back at length out of *Egypt*, the land of their captivity, into *Canaan*.

Oh then, if any thing can make you obedient, let the hope of God's gracious preſence prevail with you to be ſo! Your Honours, your Riches, your Friends, and all your Creature-comforts may be eaſily with-held; theſe are but as the ſhining of the Sun, which every diſcontented cloud may intercept: But, if you walk in obedience with God, there is nothing can intercept his preſence, nor hinder you from having communion with him. Are you baniſhed from your own habitations, and forced to ſojourn as ſtrangers in a ſtrange land? There will the Lord be with you, as with *Jacob* at *Padan-Aram*, *Gen.* 28. 15.

Are you ſhut up in cloſe Priſon, and lie under reſtraint, that your Friends may not viſit you? There will God alſo be preſent with you, as with *Paul* and *Silas*, compaſſing you about with ſongs of deliverance, *Acts* 16. 25.

Are you, in a word, as men appointed unto death, caſt into an hot fiery Furnace? There likewiſe, will the Lord be preſent with you, as with *Shadrach*, *Meſhech*, and *Abed-nego*, not ſuffering the flames to kindle upon you, *Dan.* 3. 27.

5. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God with thoſe that obey him according to what they have heard, and learned, and received, that it makes them rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Many traduce Religion, as a

thing

thing that makes men melancholique: But, his eſtate is of all mens, moſt joyful, who walking in obedience with God, doth enjoy his preſence. For, where can the ſoul find thoſe comforts which do fill it with gladneſs, and crown it with delight, but in God? His preſence is a Chriſtians Muſick, and Feſtival, The *Nectar*, and *Ambroſia*, whereon he delights to feed.

You may ſooner taſte hony, than tell how ſweet it is: So you may taſte what joy and gladneſs, God's preſence puts into the ſoul, but can never expreſs it. Would you then have your ſouls overflowing with gladneſs? Would you have them rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory? Then walk in obedience with God, and his preſence will do it.

6. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God, with all that obey him according to what they have heard, and learned, and received, that it ſweetens every croſs, and makes them not only rejoyce*, but to rejoyce in Tribulation, *Rom.* 5. 3, *Amartudines mundi dulces reddit.* The wine of God's preſence can ſweeten the bitter waters of *Marah*. Let ſickneſs come, let reproach come, let perſecution come, yea, let death it ſelf come; yet the ſenſe of God's gracious preſence takes away the ſting out of all theſe.

Such is the power of God's gracious preſence, that it takes away the bitterneſs of affliction from all that walk in obedience with him, gives them hony out of the belly of Lyons, meat out of the Eater, and ſweet out of Sowr.

If, then, you deſire you deſire to ſee light in darkneſs, to have your Priſon turned into a Paradiſe, and the flames of Martyrdom into a bed of Spices; See then, that you walk in obedience with God, according to what you have have heard, and learned, and received.

Proſperity without God's gracions preſence, is full of trouble: but trouble, with the preſence of God, is full of comfort.

7. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God with thoſe that obey him according to what they have heard, and learned, and received, that it doth not only rejoyce their Souls, but gives them full ſatisfaction.* The Sun ſatisfieth the eye with light, the Fountain ſatisfieth the thirſty with water: So God ſatisfieth, by his gracious preſence, all that walk in obedience with him.

Outward Comforts do ſooner cloy than chear, and ſooner weary than fill; They can no more ſatisfie the heart, than a Triangle can fill a Circle: But when once God comes, and vouchſafes his gracious preſence, now the Soul is at reſt, now it's come to its Center; And with *Jacob* it can ſay, *I have enough*. For with whom God is graciouſly preſent, to all them he is an all-ſufficient portion.

8. Conſider, *The preſence of God with all thoſe that obey him in what they have heard, and learned, and received, is ſuch as ſhall endure for ever.* Your Riches, your Comforts, your Friends may be with you to day, and gone to morrow: but with whom God is once graciouſly preſent, to them he continues the preſence of his Grace, his Love, and his Favour for ever.

God may, indeed, with-draw the light of his Countenance for a time; but, totally and for ever, he will never deſert thoſe that walk in obedience with him.

All things without God, are full of vanity and changes; only the Lord will never utterly abſent himſelf from us, if once He be graciouſly preſent with us; He is a faithful Friend, loving at all times; His Favour is a Sun that knows no ſetting; and His preſence a Well of comfort, ſpringing up to eternal life, *Joh.* 4. 14. & 13. 1.

So that, if you regard a Treaſure that ſhall never be taken from you, that Favour which ſhall never end in frowns, make ſure of God's gracious preſence, by walking in obedience with Him, according to what you have heard, and learned, and received from Him.

9. Conſider, *Such is the preſence of God with thoſe that walk in obedience with Him, that it's every way ſutable and correſpondent to their Souls neceſſities.* Whatever the Soul can deſire, whatever it ſtands in need of, may be found in God's gracious preſence; This is beauty to Adorn, this is gold to Enrich, this is balm to Heal, this is bread to Strengthen, this is wine to comfort and make glad the Soul in the time of heavineſs!

Are we in danger, this is a Shield; are we diſconſolate, this is a Sun: If, in a word, we be purſued by any Calamity, this is like the munition of Rocks, an hiding place againſt the Storm, and a Tower, wherein we may find ſafety!

If then God's gracious preſence be thus proper to our wants

wants, and ſo ſuitable to all our neceſſities, How ought we to labour for it, by walking in obedience with Him, according to what we have heard, and learned, and received from Him?

10. And laſtly, *Such is the preſence of God with thoſe that obey him, according to what they have heard, and learned, and received; thatit fits them for everlaſting Communion with Himſelf in Glory.* God's People, they go from Communion, to Communion; from Communion with God in a ſtate of Grace, to Communion with God in a ſtate of Glory. For, with whomſoever God is graciouſly preſent here, they ſhall hereafter enjoy His bliſful, ſoul-raviſhing, and beatifical preſence to all Eternity!

If then you deſire to be with the Lord for ever, where you ſhall ſee His Glory, enjoy his Preſence, and be ſatisfied with pleaſures at his right hand for evermore; then ſee that you walk in obedience before Him. For, thoſe only ſhall enjoy God's preſence in a ſtate of Glory, with whom he is now preſent in a ſtate of Grace. There is no Commencing Saints, either Militant on Earth, or Triumphant in Heaven, *per Saltum*: If we draw not nigh to God in a way of obedience here, we muſt hereafter be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from His preſence, and from the glory of His power.

Thus, by Divine Aſſiſtance, I have ſhewed you the Excellency of God's preſence with all ſuch as obey him, according to *what they have heard, and learned, and received from Him.* Now then, do not deprive your ſelves of ſo glorious a Priviledge, but ſee that henceforth you walk in obedience with God, giving diligence to practiſe thoſe things you have learned!

But that you may not at length be diſappointed, neither finding God graciouſly preſent with you here, nor enjoying His preſence in Glory hereafter; be ſure, that in doing what you have heard, learned, and received, you obſerve theſe following Directions.

1. *Be ſure, that of all which you have heard, and learned, and received, either of me, or of any other, you practiſe that only which you find to be of God, and according to the unerring Rule of his Word.* We have one Heavenly King, and muſt therefore obſerve one Law; we have one God, and muſt Worſhip by one Rule; we have one Shepherd, and muſt be com-

commanded by one voice; we have, in a word, one Head, and muſt follow upon that account one Direction.

All that builded *Noah*'s Ark, builded by one Pattern: So, all that intend to build themſelves an Heavenly and Spiritual Houſe to God, muſt build by one Rule. All *Iſrael* travelled to the Land of *Canaan* by the light of one fiery Pillar: So, all that will travel to the Heavenly *Canaan* of God's gracious Preſence, muſt make his Word alone *a light to their feet, and a lanthorn to their paths.* All the Paſſengers in a Ship ſail by one Compaſs: So, all that will ſteer a right Courſe to the Haven of Eternal Reſt, muſt keep cloſe to the unerring Rule of God's Word, as their only Compaſs, *Phil.* 3. 16.

For it's God's Prerogative to preſcribe, and man's Duty to conform: our ſervice is no ſervice, nor will God be preſent with us in any thing that we do, farther than we *have heard, and learned, and received it from him*, Mat. 15. 9.

Let then, every man amongſt you, that deſires God's preſence, either in grace here, or in glory hereafter, be like thoſe noble *Bereans*, examining the ground of their Faith and Obedience. Oh, do not offer to God a ſacrifice without eyes; your Religion muſt be Scripture-Religion, and all your Obedience commanded therein, would you ever be accepted of God in what you do!

2. *Be ſure, that what ever you have heard, received, and learned, you do it cordially, without diſſembling.* The Obedience of the life without, when integrity of heart and the life of grace is wanting within, finds no acceptance with God; nor will he ever be graciouſly preſent, with thoſe, who only draw nigh unto him by an external conformity.

Obedience, without the heart; and to practiſe what we have heard, and learned, and received, but not in ſincerity; will bring neither glory to God, nor comfort to us.

Do not then diſſemble any longer with the God of Heaven; Oh, be not induſtrious to plot your own death, & through your hypocriſie, go to hell in the way of Duty; but what ever you have heard, what ever you have learned, what ever you have received, be ſure that you do it heartly as unto God!

3. *Be ſure, that what ever you have heard, and learned, and received, you do it univerſally, without any reſervations.* True Obedience

Obedience is univerſal. Doing many things, and neglecting others, will not ſave; one leak in the Ship of thy ſoul is enough to ſink it in eternal Perdition, *Pſal.* 119.

The hypocrite will walk in ſome of God's ſtatutes; but, with *David*, you muſt *have reſpect to all his Commandments*, if you ever deſire the Lord to be preſent with you, as he was with *David*.

Every Duty, therefore, commanded, be ſure that you do it; and every ſin forbidden, be ſure that you ſhun it as Hell it ſelf.

Many wholeſom Doctrines have been taught, many ſoul-ſaving Truths have been made known among you; well, of all that you ever heard, received, and learned, let nothing fall to the ground, but bring all into practiſe, would you ever enjoy God's gracious preſence!

4. And laſtly; *Of all that you have heard, and learned, and received from God, be ſure that you do it conſtantly, without giving over. The Lord is with you* (ſaith the Prophet, ſpeaking to *Aſa* and all *Juda*) *while ye are with him; if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you: but, if you forſake him, he will alſo forſake you*, 2 Chron. 15. 2.

If we deſire that God ſhould alwayes be preſent with us, in a way of mercy, we muſt ſtill ſtrive to be preſent with him in a way of Duty; and, if we would not have God caſt us off, and forſake us in the end, we muſt be careful not to forſake him, but to hold on with God, in a way of Obedience, to the end.

He that ſhall endure to the end, ſaith Chriſt, *the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. 24. 13. As God condemns no man before he ſins: ſo, neither will he crown any man before he overcomes. We muſt Conquer, before we can triumph, win the Garland, before we can wear it, and obtain the Crown of Eternal Communion with God in glory, *by patient continuance in well-doing*, Rom. 2. 8.

Let me then, once for all, as a lover of your ſouls, beſeech you, what ever you have heard, what ever you have learned, what ever you have received, from the Lord, that you practiſe it, and that to the end. Oh, remember what you have heard; give diligence to practiſe what you have learned; and what ever you have received from the Lord, whether concerning principles of Faith, or Precepts of Life, be ſure that you *hold it faſt, that no man take your Crown*, Rev. 3. 3.

Know-

Knowledge, without anſwerable practiſe, will not avail you; and the practiſe of what you know, without perſeverance therein to the end, will but aggravate your condemnation, and ſerve to ſink you the deeper in the pit of eternal Perdition, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21.

Take heed therefore, that you be not carried away with the error of the wicked; let no thought ariſe within you, of departing from the living God: but, preſs on towards the mark, hold faſt your Integrity, perſevere in Obedience to God, according to what you have heard, and learned, and received from the Lord, and ſee that you break through all diſcouragements for Communion with him.

In God you have a living Spring, when all your bottles are empty; in him you have a ſure Sanctuary, when all your Refuges and hiding places in the world, are laid level with the ground; in him you have a glorious Sun, when all the blazing-ſtars of your creature-comforts are extinguiſh't, and diſappear; in him, to be ſhort, you ſhall find everlaſting friendſhip, when all your friends, according to the fleſh, are put to perpetual ſilence in the Grave.

Oh then, be careful that you cleave to this God; that you repoſe your ſelves wholly upon him; and that you conſtantly, without giving over, walk in Obedience with him, according to what *you have heard, and learned, and received:* that ſo, enjoying God's gracious Preſence here in a ſtate of Grace, you may hereafter enjoy the preſential, ſoul-ſatisfying, and open Viſion of himſelf, in a ſtate of Glory!

FINIS.

EDUCATIONAL LIBRARY
PRESENTED BY
MRS WILSON
OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS
FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE LATE
JOSHUA WILSON Esq
1876